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MODERN AMERICAN POETRY

(Revised and Enlarged Edition)

BY

LOUIS UNTERMEYER

Author of "*Challenge*," "*Including Horace*," "*The New Era in American Poetry*," etc.

NEW YORK

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1921

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PREFACE

The Civil War—and After

THE end of the Civil War marked the end of a literary epoch. The New England group, containing (if Poe could be added) all the great names of the antebellum period, began to disintegrate. The poets had outsung themselves; it was a time of surrender and swan-songs. Unable to respond to the new forces of political nationalism and industrial reconstruction, the Brahmins (that famous group of intellectuals who dominated literary America) withdrew into their libraries. Poets like Longfellow, Bryant, Taylor, turned their eyes away from the native scene, rhapsodized endlessly about Europe, echoed the "parlor poetry" of England, or left creative writing altogether and occupied themselves with translations. "They had been borne into an era in which they had no part," writes Fred Lewis Pattee (*A History of American Literature Since 1870*), "and they contented themselves with reëchoings of the old music." . . . Within a single period of six years, from 1867 to 1872, there appeared Longfellow's *Divina Commedia,* C. E. Norton's *Vita Nuova,* T. W. Parson's *Inferno,* William Cullen Bryant's *Iliad* and *Odyssey,* and Bayard Taylor's *Faust.*

Suddenly the break came. America developed a na-

tional consciousness; the West discovered itself, and the East discovered the West. Grudgingly at first, the aristocratic leaders made way for a new expression; crude, jangling, vigorously democratic. The old order was changing with a vengeance. All the preceding writers —poets like Emerson, Thoreau, Lowell, Longfellow, Holmes—were not only products of the New England colleges, but typically "Boston gentlemen of the early Renaissance." To them the new men must have seemed like a regiment recruited from the ranks of vulgarity. Walt Whitman, Mark Twain, Bret Harte, John Hay, Joaquin Miller, Joel Chandler Harris, James Whitcomb Riley—these were men who had graduated from the farm, the frontier, the mine, the pilot-house, the printer's shop! For a while, the movement seemed of little consequence; the impact of Whitman and the Westerners was averted. The poets of the transition, with a deliberate art, ignored the surge of a spontaneous national expression. They were even successful in holding it back. But it was gathering force.

THE "POST-MORTEM" PERIOD

The nineteenth century, up to its last quarter, had been a period of new vistas and revolts: a period of protest and iconoclasm—the era of Shelley and Byron, the prophets of "liberty, equality and fraternity." It left no immediate heirs. In England, its successors by default were the lesser Victorians.[1] In America, the inten-

[1] See *Modern British Poetry*, pages xi-xiii.

sity and power of men like Emerson and Whittier gave way to the pale romanticism and polite banter of the transition, or, what might even more fittingly be called the " post-mortem " poets. For these interim lyrists were frankly the singers of reaction, reminiscently digging among the bones of a long-dead past. They burrowed and borrowed, half archaeologists, half artisans; impelled not so much by the need of creating poetry as the desire to write it.

From 1866 to 1880 the United States was in a chaotic and frankly materialistic condition; it was full of political scandals, panics, frauds, malfeasance in high places. The moral fiber was flabby; the country was apathetic, corrupt and contented. As in all such periods of national unconcern, the artists turned from life altogether, preoccupying themselves with the by-products of art: with method and technique, with elaborate and artificial conceits, with facile ideas rather than fundamental ideals. Bayard Taylor, Thomas Buchanan Read, Richard Henry Stoddard, Paul Hamilton Hayne, Thomas Bailey Aldrich —all of these authors, in an effort to escape a reality they could not express and did not even wish to understand, fled to a more congenial realm of fantasy. They took the easiest routes to a prim and academic Arcadia, to a cloying and devitalized Orient or a mildly sensuous and treacle-dripping Greece. In short, they followed wherever Keats, Shelley (in his lesser lyrics) and Tennyson seemed to lead them. However, not being explorers themselves, they ventured no further than their predecessors, but remained politely in the rear; repeating dulcetly

what they had learned from their greater guides—pronouncing it with little variety but with a vast and sentimental unction. In their desperate preöccupation with lures and legends overseas, they were not, except for the accident of birth, American at all; all of them owed much more to old England than to New England.

WALT WHITMAN

Whitman, who was to influence future generations so profoundly in Europe as well as in America, had already appeared. The third edition of that stupendous volume, *Leaves of Grass,* had been printed in 1860. Almost immediately after, the publisher failed and the book passed out of public notice. But private scrutiny was keen. In 1865 a petty official discovered that Whitman was the author of the "notorious" *Leaves of Grass* and, in spite of his great sacrifices in nursing hundreds of wounded soldiers, in spite of his many past services and his present poverty, the offending poet was dismissed from his small clerkship in the Department of the Interior at Washington, D. C. Other reverses followed rapidly. But Whitman, broken in health and cheated by his exploiters, lived to see not only a seventh edition of his great work published in 1881, but a complete collection printed in his seventy-third year (1892) in which the twelve poems of the experimental first edition had grown to nearly four hundred.

The influence of Whitman can scarcely be overestimated. It has touched every shore of letters, quick-

ened every current of art. And yet, as late as 1900, Barrett Wendell in his *Literary History of America* could speak of Whitman's "eccentric insolence of phrase and temper" and, perturbed by the poet's increasing vogue across the Atlantic (Whitman had been hailed by men as eminent as Swinburne, Symonds, Rossetti), he is led to write such a preposterous sentence as "In temperament and style he was an exotic member of that sterile brotherhood which eagerly greeted him abroad."

Such a judgment would be impossible today. Whitman has been acclaimed by a great and growing public, not only here but in England, Germany, Italy and France. He has been hailed as prophet, as pioneer, as rebel, as the fiery humanist and, most frequently, as liberator. He is, in spite of the rhetorical flourish, the Lincoln of our literature. The whole scheme of *Leaves of Grass* is inclusive rather than exclusive; its form is elemental, dynamic, free.

Nor was it only in the relatively minor matter of form that Whitman became our great poetic emancipator. He led the way toward a wider aspect of democracy; he took his readers out of fusty, lamp-lit libraries into the coarse sunlight and the buoyant air. He was, as Burroughs wrote, preëminently the poet of vista; his work had the power "to open doors and windows, to let down bars rather than to put them up, to dissolve forms, to escape narrow boundaries, to plant the reader on a hill rather than in a corner." He could do this because, first of all, he believed implicitly in life—in its physical as well as its spiritual manifestations; he sought to grasp existence

as a whole, not rejecting the things that, to other minds, had seemed trivial or tawdry. The cosmic and the commonplace were synonymous to him; he declared he was part of the most elemental, primitive things and constantly identified himself with them.

"What is commonest, cheapest, nearest, easiest is Me."

And by "me" he meant not only himself but any man; Whitman's entire work, which has so often been misunderstood as the outpourings of egotism, was never so much a celebration of himself as a glorification of the ordinary man, "the divine average."

It was this breadth, this jubilant acceptance that made Whitman so keen a lover of casual and ordinary things; he was the first of our poets to reveal "the glory of the commonplace." He transmuted, by the intensity of his emotion, material which had been hitherto regarded as too unpoetic for poetry. His long poem "Song of Myself" is an excellent example. Here his "barbaric yawp," sounded "over the roofs of the world," is softened, time and again, to express a lyric ecstasy and naïf wonder.

I believe a leaf of grass is no less than the journey-work of the stars,
And the pismire is equally perfect, and a grain of sand, and the egg of the wren,
And the tree-toad is a chef-d'œuvre of the highest,
And the running blackberry would adorn the parlors of heaven,
And the narrowest hinge in my hand puts to scorn all machinery,
And the cow, crunching with depressed head, surpasses any statue,
And a mouse is miracle enough to stagger sextillions of infidels!

It is this large naturalism, this affection for all that is homely and of the soil, that sets Whitman apart from his fellow craftsmen as our first American poet. This blend of familiarity and grandeur, this racy but religious mysticism animates all his work. It swings with tremendous vigor through "Crossing Brooklyn Ferry"; it sharpens the sturdy rhythms (and occasional rhymes) of the "Song of the Broad-Axe"; it beats sonorously through "Drum-Taps"; it whispers immortally through the "Memories of President Lincoln" (particularly that magnificent threnody "When Lilacs Last in the Door-yard Bloomed"); it quickens the "Song of the Open Road" with what Tennyson called "the glory of going on," and lifts with a biblical solemnity in his most famous "Out of the Cradle Endlessly Rocking."

Whitman did not scorn the past; no one was quicker than he to see its wealth and glories. But most of the older flowerings belonged to their own era; they were foreign to our country—transplanted, they did not seem to flourish on this soil. What was original with many transatlantic poets was being merely aped by facile and unoriginal bards in these states; concerned only with the myths of other and older countries, they were blind to the living legends of their own. In his "Song of the Exposition" Whitman not only wrote his own *credo,* he uttered the manifesto of the new generation—especially in these lines:

Come Muse, migrate from Greece and Ionia.
Cross out, please, those immensely overpaid accounts;

That matter of Troy and Achilles' wrath, and Aeneas', Odysseus' wanderings;
Placard "Removed" and "To Let" on the rocks of your snowy Parnassus. . . .
For know that a better, fresher, busier sphere, a wider, untried domain awaits, demands you.

THE AWAKENING OF THE WEST

By 1870 the public had been surfeited with sugared conceits and fine-spun delicacies. For almost twelve years, Whitman had stormed at the affectations and over-refinements of the period but comparatively few had listened. Yet an instinctive distaste for the prevailing superficialities had been growing, and when the West began to express itself in the raw accents of Mark Twain and Bret Harte, the people turned to them with enthusiasm and no little relief. Mark Twain, a prose Whitman, revealed the romantic Mississippi and the vast mid-West; Bret Harte, beginning a new American fiction in 1868, ushered in the wild humor and wilder poetry of California. It is still a question whether Bret Harte or John Hay first discovered the literary importance of Pike County narratives. Twain was positive that Hay was the pioneer; documentary evidence points to Harte. But it is indisputable that Harte developed—and even overdeveloped—the possibilities of his backgrounds, whereas Hay after a few brilliant ballads, reverted to his early poetic ideals and turned to the production of studied, polished and undistinguished verse. Lacking the tremendous gusto of Mark Twain or even

the native accuracy of Hay, Bret Harte perfected a terse, dramatic idiom. Less exuberant than his compeers, he became more skilful in making his situations "effective"; he popularized dialect, sharpening his outlines and intensifying the power of his prose. Harte's was an influence that found its echo in the Hoosier stories of Edward Eggleston and made so vivid an impress on nineteenth-century literature.

To the loose swagger of the West, two other men added their diverse contributions. Edward Rowland Sill, cut short just as his work was gaining headway and strength, brought to it a gentle radicalism, a calm and cultured honesty; Joaquin Miller, rushing to the other extreme, theatricalized and exaggerated all he touched. He shouted platitudes at the top of his voice; his lines boomed with the pomposity of a brass band; floods, fires, hurricanes, extravagantly blazing sunsets, Amazonian women, the thunder of a herd of buffaloes—all were unmercifully piled on. And yet, even in its most blatant *fortissimos,* Miller's poetry occasionally captured the lavish grandeur of his surroundings, the splendor of the Sierras, the surge and spirit of the Western world.

Now that the leadership of letters had passed from the East, all parts of the country began to try their voices. The West continued to hold its tuneful supremacy; the tradition of Harte and Hay was followed (softened and sentimentalized) by Eugene Field and James Whitcomb Riley. In the South, Irwin Russell was pioneering in negro dialect (1875), Sidney Lanier fashioned his intricate harmonies (1879), and Madison

Free to rejoice
In blisses and beauties!
Free as the voice
Of the wind as it passes!
Free . . . *etc.*

Free, one concludes, to dwell with Music and Wine, Myrtle and Wanda, Art and Letters. Free, in short, to follow, with a more athletic energy, the same ideals as the parlor-poets they gibed so relentlessly. And the new insurgence triumphed. It was the heartiness, the gypsy jollity, the rush of high spirits that conquered. Readers of the *Vagabondia* books were swept along by their speed faster than by their philosophy.

The enthusiastic acceptance of these new apostles of outdoor vigor was, however, not as much of an accident as it seemed. On one side, the world of art, the public was wearied by barren philosophizing set to tinkling music; on the other, the world of action, it was faced by a staggering growth of materialism which it feared. Hovey, Carman and their imitators offered a swift and stirring way out. But it was neither an effectual nor a permanent escape. The war with Spain, the industrial turmoil, the growth of social consciousness and new ideas of responsibility made America look for fresh valuations, more searching songs. Hovey began to go deeper into himself and his age; in the mid-West, William Vaughn Moody grappled with the problems of his times only to have his work cut short by death in 1910. But these two were exceptions; in the main, it was another interval—two decades of appraisal and expectancy, of pause and preparation.

Preface

INTERIM—1890-1912

This interval of about twenty years was notable for its effort to treat the spirit of the times with a cheerful evasiveness, a humorous unconcern; its most representative craftsmen were, with four exceptions, the writers of light verse. These four exceptions were Richard Hovey, Bliss Carman, William Vaughn Moody and Edwin Markham. Both Hovey (in his *Along the Trail* and his modernization of *Launcelot* and *Guenevere,* a poetic drama in five books) and Carman (in his later poems like *Songs of the Sea Children*) saw wider horizons and tuned their instruments to a larger music.

Moody's power was still greater. In "An Ode in Time of Hesitation," he protested against turning the "new-world victories into gain" and painted America on a majestic canvas. In "The Quarry" he celebrated America's part in preventing the breaking-up of China by the greedy empires of Europe (an act accomplished by John Hay, poet and diplomat). In "On a Soldier Fallen in the Philippines," a dirge wrenched from the depths of his nature, Moody cried out against our own grasping imperialists. It was the fulfilment of this earlier poem which found its fierce climax in the lengthy Ode, with lines like:

> Was it for this our fathers kept the law?
> This crown shall crown their struggle and their ruth?
> Are we the eagle nation Milton saw
> Mewing its mighty youth? . . .

Preface

. . . . O ye who lead
Take heed!
Blindness we may forgive, but baseness we will smite.

Early in 1899, the name of Edwin Markham flashed across the land when, out of San Francisco, rose the sonorous challenge of "The Man with the Hoe." This poem, which has been ecstatically called "the battle-cry of the next thousand years" (Joaquin Miller declared it contained "the whole Yosemite—the thunder, the might, the majesty"), caught up, with a prophetic vibrancy, the passion for social justice that was waiting to be intensified in poetry. Markham summed up and spiritualized the unrest that was in the air; in the figure of one man with a hoe, he drew a picture of men in the mines, men in the sweat-shop, men working without joy, without hope. To social consciousness he added social conscience. In a ringing blank verse, Markham crystallized the expression of outrage, the heated ferment of the period. His was a vision of a new order, austere in beauty but deriving its life-blood from the millions struggling in the depths.

Inspiring as these examples were, they did not generate others of their kind; the field lay fallow for more than a decade. The lull was pronounced, the gathering storm remained inaudible.

RENASCENCE—1913

Suddenly the "new" poetry burst upon us with unexpected vigor and extraordinary variety. Moody and

Markham were its immediate forerunners; Whitman its godfather. October, 1912, saw the first issue of *Poetry: A Magazine of Verse,* a monthly that was to introduce the work of hitherto unknown poets and to herald, with an eager impartiality, the various groups, schools and "movements." The magazine came at the very moment before the breaking of the storm. Flashes and rumblings had already been troubling the literary heavens; a few months later—the deluge! For three years the skies continued to discharge such strange and divergent phenomena as Vachel Lindsay's *General William Booth Enters into Heaven* (1913), James Oppenheim's *Songs for the New Age* (1914), the first anthology of *The Imagists* (1914), *Challenge* (1914), Amy Lowell's *Sword Blades and Poppy Seed* (1914), Lindsay's *The Congo and Other Poems* (1914), Robert Frost's *North of Boston* (1914), Edgar Lee Master's *Spoon River Anthology* (1915), John Gould Fletcher's *Irradiations* (1915), Carl Sandburg's *Chicago Poems* (1916). By 1917, the "new" poetry was ranked as "America's first national art"; its success was sweeping, its sales unprecedented. People who never before had read verse, turned to it and found they could not only read but relish it. They discovered that for the enjoyment of poetry it was not necessary to have at their elbows a dictionary of rare words and classical references; they no longer were required to be acquainted with Latin legendry and the minor love-affairs of the major Greek divinities. Life was their glossary, not literature. The new product spoke to them in their own language. And

it did more: it spoke to them of what they had scarcely ever heard expressed; it was not only closer to their soil but nearer their souls.

ROBINSON AND MASTERS

One reason why the new poetry achieved so sudden a success was its freedom from the traditionally stilted "poetic diction." Revolting strongly against the assumption that poetry must have a vocabulary of its own, the poets of the new era spoke in the oldest and most stirring tongue; they used a language that was the language not of the poetasters but of the people. In the tones of ordinary speech they rediscovered the strength, the dignity, the divine core of the commonplace.

E. A. Robinson had already been employing the sharp epithet, the direct and clarifying utterance which was to become part of our present technique. As early as 1897, in *The Children of the Night,* Robinson anticipated the brief characterizations and the etched outlines of Masters's *Spoon River Anthology;* he stressed the psychological element with unerring artistry and sureness of touch. His sympathetic studies of men whose lives were, from a worldly standpoint, failures were a sharp reaction to the current high valuation on financial achievements, ruthless efficiency and success at any cost. Ahead of his period, he had to wait until 1916, when a public prepared for him by the awakened interest in native poetry discovered *The Man Against the Sky* (1916) and the richness of Robinson at the same time.

Preface

Frost and Masters were the bright particular planets of 1915, although the star of the latter has waned while the light of the former has grown in magnitude. Yet Masters's most famous book will rank as one of the landmarks of American literature. In it, he has synthesized the small towns of the mid-West with a background that is unmistakably local and implications that are universal. This amazing volume, in its curiosity and comprehensiveness, is a broad cross-section of whole communities. Beneath its surface tales and dramas, its condensation of grocery-store gossip, *Spoon River Anthology* is a great part of America in microcosm. The success of the volume was sensational. It was actually one of the season's "best sellers"; in a few months, it went into edition after edition. People forgot Masters's revelation of the sordid cheats and hypocrisies, his arraignment of dirty politics and dirtier chicanery, in their interest at seeing their neighbors so pitilessly exposed. Yet had Masters dwelt only on the drab disillusion of the village, had he (as he was constantly in danger of doing) overemphasized the morbid and sensual episodes, he would have left only a spectacular and poorly-balanced work. But the book ascends to buoyant exaltation and ends on a plane of victorious idealism. In its wide gamut, *Spoon River,* rising from its narrow origins, reaches epical proportions. Indigenous to its roots, it is stark, unflinching, unforgettable.

FROST AND SANDBURG

The same year that brought forth *Spoon River Anthology* saw the American edition of Frost's *North of*

Boston. It was evident at once that the true poet of New England had arrived. Unlike his predecessors, Frost was never a poetic provincial—never parochial in the sense that America was still a literary parish of England. He is as native as the lonely farmhouses, the dusty blueberries, the isolated people, the dried-up brooks and mountain intervals that he describes. Loving, above everything else, the beauty of the Fact, he shares, with Robinson and Masters, the determination to tell not merely the actual but the factual truth. But Frost, a less disillusioned though a more saddened poet, wears his rue and his realism with a difference. Where Robinson is downright and definite, Frost diverges, going roundabout and, in his speculative wandering, covering a wider territory of thought. Where Masters is violent and hotly scornful, Frost is reticent and quietly sympathetic. Again where Masters, viewing the mêlée above the struggle, writes *about* his characters, Frost is *of* the people. Where Robinson, in his more racy and reminiscent moods, often reflects New England, Frost *is* New England.

North of Boston is well described by the poet's own sub-title: "a book of people." In it one not only sees a countryside of people making the intricate pattern of their lives, one catches them thinking out loud, one can hear the very tones of their voices. Here we have speech so arranged and translated that the speaker is heard on the printed page; any reader will be led by the kind and color of these words into reproducing the changing accents in which they are supposed to be uttered. It is this insistence that "all poetry is the reproduction of the

tones of actual speech" that gives these poems, as well as the later ones, a quickly-communicated emotional appeal. It endows them with the deepest power of which words are capable—the power to transmit significant sounds. These sounds, let in from the vernacular, are full of a robust, creative energy; they share the blood and bones of the people they represent.

But Frost is by no means the dark naturalist that many suspect. Behind the mask of "grimness" which many of his critics have fastened upon him, there is a continual elfin pucker; a whimsical smile, a half-disclosed raillery glints beneath his most somber monologues. His most concrete facts are symbols of spiritual values; through his very reticence one hears more than the voice of New England.

Just so, the great mid-West, that vast region of steel mills and slaughter-houses, of cornfields and prairies, of crowded cities and empty skies, speaks through Carl Sandburg. In Sandburg, industrial America has found its voice: *Chicago Poems* (1916), *Cornhuskers* (1918), *Smoke and Steel* (1920) vibrate with the immense purring of dynamos, the swishing rhythms of threshing arms, the gossip and laughter of construction gangs, the gigantic and tireless energy of the modern machine. Frankly indebted to Whitman, Sandburg's poems are less sweeping but more varied; musically his lines mark a great advance. He sounds the extremes of the gamut: there are few poems in our language more violent than "To a Contemporary Bunkshooter," few lyrics as hushed and tender as "Cool Tombs."

Like Frost, Sandburg is true to *things*. But Frost is content with the inexhaustible Fact and its spiritual implications; he never hopes to drain it all. Sandburg also feeds on the fact, but it does not satisfy him. He has strange hungers; he hunts eagerly for the question behind, the answer beyond. The actual scene, to him, is a point of vivid and abrupt departure. Reality, far from being the earth on which he dwells, is, for Sandburg, the ground he touches before rising; realism acts merely as a springboard from which this poet leaps into a romantic mysticism.

When *Chicago Poems* first appeared, it was received with a disfavor ranging from hesitant patronization to the scornful jeers of the academicians. Sandburg was accused of verbal anarchy; of a failure to distinguish prose matter from poetic material; of uncouthness, vulgarity, of assaults on the English language and a score of other crimes. In the face of those who still see only a coarseness and distorted veritism in Sandburg, it cannot be said too often that he is brutal only when dealing with brutal things; that his "vulgarity" springs from an immense love of life, not from a merely decorative part of it; that his bitterest invectives are the result of a healthy disgust of shams; that, behind the force of his projectile-phrases, there burns the greater flame of his pity; that the strength of his hatred is exceeded only by the challenge of his love.

THE IMAGISTS

Sandburg established himself as the most daring user of American words—rude words ranging from the racy metaphors of the soil to the slang of the street. But even before this, the possibilities of a new vocabulary were being tested. As early as 1865, Whitman was saying, "We must have new words, new potentialities of speech—an American range of self-expression. . . . The new times, the new people need a tongue according, yes, and what is more, they will have such a tongue—will not be satisfied until it is evolved."

It is curious to think that one of the most effective agents to fulfil Whitman's prophecy and free modern poetry from its mouldering diction was that little band of preoccupied specialists, the Imagists. They were, for all their preciosity and occasional extravagances, prophets of freedom—liberators in the sense that their programs, pronouncements and propaganda compelled even their most dogged adversaries to acknowledge the integrity of their aims. Their restatement of old truths was one of the things which helped the new poetry out of a bog of rhetorical rubbish.

Ezra Pound was the first to gather the insurgents into a definite group. During the winter of 1913, he collected a number of poems illustrating the Imagist point of view and had them printed in a volume: *Des Imagistes* (1914). A little later Pound withdrew from the clan. The rather queerly assorted group began to disintegrate and Amy Lowell, then in England, brought the best of the younger

members together in three yearly anthologies (*Some Imagist Poets*) which appeared in 1915, 1916 and 1917. There were, in Miss Lowell's new grouping, three Englishmen (D. H. Lawrence, Richard Aldington, F. S. Flint), three Americans ("H. D.," John Gould Fletcher, Amy Lowell), and their creed, summed up in six articles of faith, was as follows:

1. To use the language of common speech, but to employ always the *exact* word, not the merely decorative word.
2. To create new rhythms—as the expression of new moods. We do not insist upon "free-verse" as the only method of writing poetry. . . . We do believe that the individuality of a poet may often be better expressed in free verse than in conventional forms.
3. To allow absolute freedom in the choice of subject.
4. To present an image (hence the name: "Imagist"). We are not a school of painters, but we believe that poetry should render particulars exactly and not deal in vague generalities, however magnificent and sonorous.
5. To produce poetry that is hard and clear, never blurred or indefinite.
6. Finally, most of us believe that concentration is the very essence of poetry.

It does not seem possible that these six obvious and almost platitudinous principles, which the Imagists so often neglected in their poetry, could have evoked the storm of argument, fury and downright vilification that broke as soon as the militant Amy Lowell began to champion them. Far from being revolutionary, these principles were not new; they were not even thought so by their sponsors. The Imagists themselves realized they

were merely restating ideals which had fallen into desuetude, and declared, "They are the essentials of all great poetry, indeed of all great literature." And yet many conservative critics, joined by the one hundred per cent reactionaries, rushed wildly to combat these "heresies"! They forgot that, in trying to protect the future from such lawlessness as "using the exact word," from allowing "freedom in the choice of subject," from the importance of "concentration," they were actually attacking the highest traditions of their enshrined past.

The controversy succeeded in doing even more than the work of the Imagists themselves. "H. D." remained in England, perfecting her delicate and exquisitely finished designs. John Gould Fletcher, a more vacillating expatriate, continued to strengthen his gift and shift his standards; his later and richer work is in almost flat opposition to the early pronouncements. Miss Lowell was left to carry on the battle single-handed; to defend the theories which, in practice, she was beginning to violate brilliantly. By all odds, the most energetic and unflagging experimenter, Miss Lowell's versatility became amazing. She has wielded a controversial cudgel with one hand and, with the other, she has written Chaucerian stanzas, polyphonic prose, monologs in her native New England dialect, irregular *vers libre,* conservative couplets, translations from the French, echoes from the Japanese, even primitive re-creations of Indian folk-lore!

The work of the Imagists was done. Its members began to develop themselves by themselves. They had helped to swell the tide of realistic and romantic nat-

uralism—a tide of which their contribution was merely one wave, a high breaker that carried its impact far inshore.

THE NEW FOLK-POETRY

In a country that has not been mellowed by antiquity, that has not possessed songs for its peasantry or traditions for its singers, one cannot look for a wealth of folk stuff. In such a country—the United States, to be specific—what folk-poetry there is, has followed the path of the pioneer. At first these homely songs were merely adaptations and localized versions of English ballads and border minstrelsy, of which the "Lonesome Tunes" discovered in the Kentucky mountains by Howard Brockway and Loraine Wyman are excellent examples. But later, a more definitely native spirit found expression in the various sections of these states. In the West (during the seventies) Bret Harte and John Hay celebrated, in their own accents, the rough, big-hearted miners, ranchers, steamboat pilots, the supposed descendants of the emigrants from Pike County, Missouri. In the Middle West the desire for local color and music led to the popularity of James Whitcomb Riley's Hoosier ballads and the spirited jingles of Eugene Field. In the South the inspiration of the negro spirituals and ante-bellum songs was utilized to excellent effect by Irwin Russell, Joel Chandler Harris and, later, by Paul Laurence Dunbar. The Indian, a more genuine primitive, has been as difficult to transplant poetically as he has been to assimilate ethnically. But, in spite of the racial differences in senti-

ment, religion and philosophy, brave attempts to bring the spirit of the Indian originals into our poetry have been made by Mary Austin, Constance Lindsay Skinner, Natalie Curtis Burlin, Lew Sarett and Alice Corbin Henderson.

In the West today there is a revival of interest in backwoods melodies and folk-created verse. John A. Lomax has published two volumes of cowboy songs—most of them anonymous—full of tang, wild fancy and robust humor. The tradition of Harte and Hay is being carried on by such racy interpreters as Harry Herbert Knibbs, Badger Clark and Edwin Ford Piper. But, of all contemporaries who approximate the spirit of folk-poetry, none has made more striking or more indubitably American contributions than Vachel Lindsay of Springfield, Illinois.

LINDSAY, OPPENHEIM AND OTHERS

Lindsay is essentially a people's poet. He does not hesitate to express himself in terms of the lowest common denominator; his fingers are alternately on his pen and the public pulse. Living near enough the South to appreciate the negro and yet not too near to despise him, Lindsay has been tremendously influenced by the colorful suggestions, the fantastic superstitions, the revivalistic gusto, the half-savage Christianity and, above all, by the curiously syncopated music that characterize the black man in America. In "The Congo," "John Brown" and the less extended but equally remarkable

"Simon Legree," the words roll with the solemnity of an exhortation, dance with a grotesque fervor or snap, crackle, wink and leap with all the humorous rhythms of a piece of "ragtime." Lindsay catches the burly color and boisterous music of camp-meetings, minstrel shows, revival jubilees.

And Lindsay does more. He carries his democratic determinations further than any of his *confrères*. His dream is of a great communal Art; he preaches the gospel that all villages should be centers of beauty, all its citizens, artists. At heart a missionary even more than a minstrel, Lindsay often loses himself in his own evangelism; worse, he frequently cheapens himself and caricatures his own gift by pandering to the vaudeville instinct that insists on putting a noisy "punch" into everything, regardless of taste, artistry or a sense of proportion. He is most impressive when he is least frenetic, when he is purely fantastic (as in "The Chinese Nightingale" or the series of metaphorical poems about the moon) or when a greater theme and a finer restraint unite (as in "The Eagle That Is Forgotten") to create a preaching that does not cease to be poetry.

Something of the same blend of prophet and poet is found in the work of James Oppenheim. Oppenheim is a throwback to the ancient Hebrew singers; the music of the Psalms rolls through his lines, the fire of Isaiah kindles his spirit. This poetry, with its obvious reminders of Whitman, is biblical in its inflection, Oriental in its heat; it runs through forgotten centuries and brings buried Asia to busy America. It carries to

the Western world the color of the East, adding the gift of prophecy to pragmatic purpose. In books like *War and Laughter* and *Songs for the New Age* the race of god-breakers and god-makers speaks with a new voice; here, with analytic intensity, the old iconoclasm and still older worship are again united.

The new poets have won their way by their differences as well as by their chance similarities. They belong to no one school, represent no single tendency and, differing widely from their present-day English fellow-craftsmen, are far less hampered by the burdens of traditions or the necessity of casting them off. They are more nearly free. One sees this even in the work of the more deliberately conventional singers. Lyricists like Sara Teasdale and Edna St. Vincent Millay write in a clean, straightforward idiom, an intense naturalness that is a frank commentary on the tinkling and over-sentimental verse that used to pass for genuine emotion. Robert Frost and E. A. Robinson continue to use the strictest rhymes and most rigid meters and yet their lines are as "modern," as searching as the freest free verse. Form *per se* matters scarcely at all; all forms are employed. Conrad Aiken achieves a flexible combination of rhyme and assonance. Sandburg, "H. D.," Kreymborg and John Gould Fletcher dispense, for the most part, with rhyme, without sacrificing the beauty of sound or stress. Masters and Amy Lowell use the old forms and the new ones with impartiality and equal skill. A sweeping inclusiveness distinguishes our contemporary verse; it embraces all themes, all cul-

tures, all modes of expression. America has become a melting-pot in a poetic as well as an ethnic sense. The rich variety of its structure and subject-matter is in striking opposition to the thin, specialized product of the transition poets. New England is no longer the single literary center. As the country has matured, the poets have grown with it, singing everywhere and, much to Art's confusion, in every key. It is as if submerged springs had burst through stubborn ground; instead of one placid stream, there are a dozen rushing currents.

SUMMARY—THE NEW SPIRIT

It is difficult to draw a line between periods, especially when one is called upon to define "modernity." But in the case of the development of American poetry, the task is made easier by Whitman. Whitman ended and began an epoch. This collection therefore begins where he left off; it might well be called, "American Poetry Since Whitman."

It would have been pleasant to divide the poetry itself into groups and distinct tendencies. Unfortunately such a scheme is impossible. In the first place, one can scarcely get a proper perspective on contemporary writers (on whom the chief emphasis has been placed), especially since many of them are still developing. Secondly, one cannot give the picture of a period in the state of flux except by showing its fluid character. The prime object of this collection is to reflect this very flux and diversity—particularly illustrated by those poets who, be-

cause of their strong individualism, would not fit in any one grouping. Since the chronological arrangement is, therefore, the most logical one, an arbitrary boundary has been fixed. The year 1830 becomes the dividing-line; any poet born earlier than that date is ruthlessly excluded. This, fortunately, eliminates scarcely any poet of value; for between Whitman (born 1819) and Emily Dickinson (that early imagist), there were no singers more memorable than the Cary sisters, Bayard Taylor and the painfully precise Richard Henry Stoddard.

It is a happy circumstance that this volume should begin with Emily Dickinson, whose work, posthumously printed, was unknown as late as 1890 and scarcely noticed until several years later. For here is a forerunner of the new spirit—free in expression, unhampered in choice of subject, penetrative in psychology—to which a countryful of writers has responded. No longer confined to one or two literary centers, the impulse to create is everywhere. There is scarcely a state, barely a township, that has not produced its laureate.

Most of the poets represented in these pages have found a fresh and vigorous material in a world of honest and often harsh reality. They respond to the spirit of their times; not only have their views changed, their vision has been widened to include things unknown to the poet of yesterday. They have learned to distinguish real beauty from mere prettiness; to wring loveliness out of squalor; to find wonder in neglected places; to search for hidden truths even in the dark caves of the unconscious.

And with the use of the material of everyday life, there has come a further simplification: the use of the language of everyday speech. The stilted and mouth-filling phrases have been practically discarded in favor of words that are part of our daily vocabulary. It would be hard at present to find a representative poet employing such awkward and outworn contractions as *'twixt, 'mongst, ope'*; such evidences of poor padding as *adown, did go, doth smile;* such dull rubber-stamps (*clichés* is the French term) as *heavenly blue, roseate glow, golden hope, girlish grace, gentle breeze,* etc. The *peradventures, forsooths* and *mayhaps* have disappeared. . . . And, as the speech of the modern poet has grown less elaborate, so have the patterns that embody it. Not necessarily discarding rhyme, regular rhythm or any of the musical assets of the older poets, the forms have grown simpler; the intricate versification has given way to lines that reflect and suggest the tones of animated and even exalted speech. The result of this has been a great gain both in sincerity and intensity; it has enabled the poet of today to put greater emphasis on his emotion rather than on the shell that covers it—he can dwell with richer detail on the matter instead of the manner.

One could go into minute particulars concerning the growth of an American spirit in our literature and point out how many of the latter-day poets have responded to native forces larger than their backgrounds. Such a course would be endless and unprofitable. It is pertinent, however, to observe that, young as this nation is, it is already being supplied with the stuff of legends, ballads

and even epics. The modern singer has turned to celebrate his own folk-tales. It is particularly interesting to observe how the figure of Lincoln has been treated by the best of our living poets. I have accordingly included seven poems by seven writers, each differing in manner, technique and point of view.

For the rest, I leave the casual reader, as well as the student, to discover the awakened vigor and energy in this, one of the few great poetic periods in native literature. With the realization that this brief gathering is not so much a summary as an introduction, it is hoped that, in spite of its limitations, this collection will draw the reader on to a closer consideration of the poets here included—even to those omitted. The purpose of such an anthology must always be to stimulate an interest rather than to satisfy a curiosity. Such, at least, is the hope and aim of one editor.

L. U.

January, 1921.
New York City.

MODERN AMERICAN POETRY

Emily Dickinson

Emily Dickinson, whose work is one of the most original contributions to recent poetry, was born in Amherst, Massachusetts, December 10, 1830. She was a physical as well as a spiritual hermit, actually spending most of her life without setting foot beyond her doorstep. She wrote her short, introspective verses without thought of publication, and it was not until 1890, four years after her death, that the first volume of her posthumous poetry appeared with an introduction by Thomas Wentworth Higginson.

"She habitually concealed her mind, like her person, from all but a very few friends," writes Higginson, "and it was with great difficulty that she was persuaded to print, during her lifetime, three or four poems." Yet she wrote almost five hundred of these direct and spontaneous illuminations, sending many of them in letters to friends, or (written on chance slips of paper and delivered without further comment) to her sister Sue. Slowly the peculiar Blake-like quality of her thought won a widening circle of readers; *Poems* (1890) was followed by *Poems—Second Series* (1892) and *Poems—Third Series* (1896), the contents being collected and edited by her two friends, Thomas Wentworth Higginson and Mabel Loomis Todd. Several years later, a further generous volume was assembled by her niece, Martha Dickinson Bianchi, entitled *The Single Hound* (1914)—almost all of the new poems (to which Mrs. Bianchi wrote a preface of great personal value) being a record of Emily Dickinson's romantic friendship for her sister.

The sharp quality of her work, with its cool precision and clear imagery, makes her akin, at least in technique, to the later Imagists. (See Preface.) But a passionate and almost mystical warmth brings her closer to the great ones of her

time. "An epigrammatic Walt Whitman," some one has called her, a characterization which, while enthusiastic to the point of exaggeration, expresses the direction if not the execution of her art. Technically, Emily Dickinson's work was strikingly uneven; many of her poems are no more than rough sketches, awkwardly filled in; even some of her finest lines are marred by the intrusion of merely trivial conceits or forced "thought-rhymes." But the best of her work is incomparable in its strange cadence and quiet intensity. Her verses are like a box of many jewels, sparkling in their brilliancy, cameo-like in their delicate contours, opalescent in their buried fires.

Emily Dickinson died, in the same place she was born, at Amherst, May 15, 1886.

CHARTLESS

I never saw a moor,
I never saw the sea;
Yet now I know how the heather looks,
And what a wave must be.

I never spoke with God,
Nor visited in Heaven;
Yet certain am I of the spot
As if the chart were given.

INDIAN SUMMER

These are the days when birds come back,
A very few, a bird or two,
To take a backward look.

These are the days when skies put on
The old, old sophistries of June,—
A blue and gold mistake.

Oh, fraud that can not cheat the bee,
Almost thy plausibility
Induces my belief,

Till ranks of seeds their witness bear,
And softly through the altered air
Hurries a timid leaf!

Oh, sacrament of summer days,
Oh, last communion in the haze,
Permit a child to join,

Thy sacred emblems to partake,
Thy consecrated bread to break,
Taste thine immortal wine!

SUSPENSE

Elysium is as far as to
The very nearest room,
If in that room a friend await
Felicity or doom.

What fortitude the soul contains,
That it can so endure
The accent of a coming foot,
The opening of a door.

THE RAILWAY TRAIN

I like to see it lap the miles,
And lick the valleys up,
And stop to feed itself at tanks;
And then, prodigious, step

Around a pile of mountains,
And, supercilious, peer
In shanties by the sides of roads;
And then a quarry pare

To fit its sides, and crawl between,
Complaining all the while
In horrid, hooting stanza;
Then chase itself down hill

And neigh like Boanerges;
Then, punctual as a star,
Stop—docile and omnipotent—
At its own stable door.

A CEMETERY

This quiet Dust was Gentlemen and Ladies,
And Lads and Girls;
Was laughter and ability and sighing,
And frocks and curls.
This passive place a Summer's nimble mansion,
Where Bloom and Bees
Fulfilled their Oriental Circuit,
Then ceased like these.

Emily Dickinson

BECLOUDED

The sky is low, the clouds are mean,
A travelling flake of snow
Across a barn or through a rut
Debates if it will go.

A narrow wind complains all day
How some one treated him;
Nature, like us, is sometimes caught
Without her diadem.

Thomas Bailey Aldrich

Thomas Bailey Aldrich was born in 1836 at Portsmouth, New Hampshire, where he spent most of the sixteen years which he has recorded in that delightful memoir, *The Story of a Bad Boy* (1869). After a brief clerkship, he became junior literary critic of *The Evening Mirror* at nineteen, publishing his first book (*The Bells*), an immature collection of echoes, at the same time. From 1855 to 1866 he held various journalistic positions, associating himself with the leading metropolitan *literati*. But though Aldrich mingled with the New York group, he was not part of it; he longed for the more rarefied intellectual atmosphere of New England and when, in 1866, Osgood offered him the editorship of *Every Saturday,* published in Boston, Aldrich accepted with alacrity. A few years later he became editor of the famous *Atlantic Monthly,* holding that position from 1881 to 1890.

Aldrich's work falls into two sharply-divided classes. The first half is full of overloaded phrase-making, fervid extravagances; the reader sinks beneath clouds of damask, azure,

emerald, pearl and gold; he is drowned in a sea of musk, aloes, tiger-lilies, spice, soft music, orchids, attar-breathing dusks. There is no real air in these verses; it is Nature as conceived by a poet reading the Arabian Nights in a hot-house. In company with Stoddard and Taylor, he dwelt in a literary Orientalism—(Stoddard's *Book of the East* followed fast upon Taylor's *Poems of the Orient*)—and Aldrich's *Cloth of Gold* was suffused with similar "vanilla-flavored adjectives and patchouli-scented participles" (to quote Holmes), laboring hard to create an exotic atmosphere by a wearisome profusion of lotus blossoms, sandalwood, spikenard, blown roses, diaphanous gauzes, etc.

The second phase of Aldrich's art is more human in appeal as it is surer in artistry. He learned to sharpen his images, to fashion his smallest lyrics with a remarkable *finesse*. "In the little steel engravings that are the best expressions of his peculiar talent," writes Percy H. Boynton, "there is a fine simplicity; but it is the simplicity of an accomplished woman of the world rather than of a village maid." Although Aldrich bitterly resented the charge that he was a maker of tiny perfections, a carver of cherry-stones, these poems of his which have the best chance of permanence are some of the epigrams, the short lyrics and a few of the sonnets, passionless in tone but exquisite in design.

The best of Aldrich's diffuse poetry has been collected in an inclusive Household Edition, published by Houghton, Mifflin and Company. He died in 1907.

MEMORY

My mind lets go a thousand things,
Like dates of wars and deaths of kings,
And yet recalls the very hour—
'Twas noon by yonder village tower,

And on the last blue noon in May—
The wind came briskly up this way,
Crisping the brook beside the road;
Then, pausing here, set down its load
Of pine-scents, and shook listlessly
Two petals from that wild-rose tree.

"ENAMORED ARCHITECT OF AIRY RHYME"

Enamored architect of airy rhyme,
Build as thou wilt, heed not what each man says.
Good souls, but innocent of dreamers' ways,
Will come, and marvel why thou wastest time;
Others, beholding how thy turrets climb
'Twixt theirs and heaven, will hate thee all thy days;
But most beware of those who come to praise.
O Wondersmith, O worker in sublime
And heaven-sent dreams, let art be all in all;
Build as thou wilt, unspoiled by praise or blame,
Build as thou wilt, and as thy light is given;
Then, if at last the airy structure fall,
Dissolve, and vanish—take thyself no shame.
They fail, and they alone, who have not striven.

TWO QUATRAINS

MAPLE LEAVES

October turned my maple's leaves to gold;
The most are gone now; here and there one lingers:
Soon these will slip from out the twigs' weak hold,
Like coins between a dying miser's fingers.

Thomas Bailey Aldrich

PESSIMIST AND OPTIMIST

This one sits shivering in Fortune's smile,
Taking his joy with bated, doubtful breath.
This other, gnawed by hunger, all the while
Laughs in the teeth of Death.

John Hay

John Hay was born at Salem, Indiana, in 1838, graduated from Brown University in 1858 and was admitted to the Illinois bar a few years later. At nineteen, when he went back to Warsaw, the little Mississippi town where he had lived as a boy, he dreamed only of being a poet—a poet, it must be added, of the pleasantly conventional, transition type. But the Civil War was to disturb his mild fantasies. He became private secretary to Lincoln, then major and assistant adjutant-general under General Gilmore, then secretary of the Legation at Paris, *chargé d'affaires* at Vienna and secretary of legation at Madrid.

His few vivid *Pike County Ballads* came more as a happy accident than as a deliberate creative effort. When Hay returned from Spain in 1870, bringing with him his *Castilian Days,* he still had visions of becoming an orthodox lyric poet. But he found everyone reading Bret Harte's short stories and the new expression of the rude West. (See Preface.) He speculated upon the possibility of doing something similar, translating the characters into poetry. The result was the six racy ballads in a vein utterly different from everything Hay wrote before or after. The poet-politician seems to have regarded this series somewhat in the nature of light, extempore verse, belonging to a far lower plane than his serious publications; he talked about them reluctantly, he even hoped that they would be forgotten. It is difficult to say whether this regret grew because Hay,

loving the refinements of culture, at heart hated any suggestion of vulgarity, or because of a basic lack of courage—Hay having published his novel of labor unrest in the early 80's (*The Breadwinners*) anonymously.

The fact remains, his rhymes of Pike County have survived all his more classical lines. They served for a time as a fresh influence, they remain a creative accomplishment.

Hay was in politics all the later part of his life, ranking as one of the most brilliant Secretaries of State the country has ever had. He died in 1905.

JIM BLUDSO,

OF THE PRAIRIE BELLE

Wall, no! I can't tell whar he lives,
  Because he don't live, you see;
Leastways, he's got out of the habit
  Of livin' like you and me.
Whar have you been for the last three year
  That you haven't heard folks tell
How Jimmy Bludso passed in his checks
  The night of the Prairie Belle?

He war'n't no saint,—them engineers
  Is all pretty much alike,—
One wife in Natchez-under-the-Hill
  And another one here, in Pike;
A keerless man in his talk was Jim,
  And an awkward hand in a row,
But he never flunked, and he never lied,—
  I reckon he never knowed how.

John Hay

And this was all the religion he had:
  To treat his engine well;
Never be passed on the river;
  To mind the pilot's bell;
And if ever the Prairie Belle took fire,
  A thousand times he swore,
He'd hold her nozzle again the bank
  Till the last soul got ashore.

All boats has their day on the Mississip,
  And her day come at last,—
The Movastar was a better boat,
  But the Belle she *wouldn't* be passed.
And so she came tearin' along that night—
  The oldest craft on the line—
With a nigger squat on her safety-valve,
  And her furnace crammed, rosin and pine.

The fire bust out as she clar'd the bar,
  And burnt a hole in the night,
And quick as a flash she turned and made
  For that willer-bank on the right.
Thar was runnin' and cussin', but Jim yelled out,
  Over all the infernal roar,
" I'll hold her nozzle again the bank
  Till the last galoot's ashore."

Through the hot, black breath of the burnin' boat
  Jim Bludso's voice was heard,
And they all had trust in his cussedness,
  And knowed he would keep his word.

And, sure's you're born, they all got off
  Afore the smokestacks fell,—
And Bludso's ghost went up alone
  In the smoke of the Prairie Belle.

He warn't no saint,—but at jedgement
  I'd run my chance with Jim,
'Longside of some pious gentlemen
  That wouldn't shook hands with him.
He seen his duty, a dead-sure thing,—
  And went for it thar and then;
And Christ ain't a goin' to be too hard
  On a man that died for men.

BANTY TIM

(*Remarks of Sergeant Tilmon Joy to the White Man's Committee of Spunky Point, Illinois*)

I reckon I git your drift, gents,—
  You 'low the boy sha'n't stay;
This is a white man's country;
  You're Dimocrats, you say;
And whereas, and seein', and wherefore,
  The times bein' all out o' j'int,
The nigger has got to mosey
  From the limits o' Spunky P'int!

Le's reason the thing a minute:
  I'm an old-fashioned Dimocrat too,
Though I laid my politics out o' the way
  For to keep till the war was through.

But I come back here, allowin'
To vote as I used to do,
Though it gravels me like the devil to train
Along o' sich fools as you.

Now dog my cats ef I kin see,
In all the light of the day,
What you've got to do with the question
Ef Tim shill go or stay.
And furder than that I give notice,
Ef one of you tetches the boy,
He kin check his trunks to a warmer clime
Than he'll find in Illanoy.

Why, blame your hearts, jest hear me!
You know that ungodly day
When our left struck Vicksburg Heights, how ripped
And torn and tattered we lay.
When the rest retreated I stayed behind,
Fur reasons sufficient to me,—
With a rib caved in, and a leg on a strike,
I sprawled on that damned glacee.

Lord! how the hot sun went for us,
And br'iled and blistered and burned!
How the Rebel bullets whizzed round us
When a cuss in his death-grip turned!
Till along toward dusk I seen a thing
I couldn't believe for a spell:
That nigger—that Tim—was a crawlin' to me
Through that fire-proof, gilt-edged hell!

John Hay

The Rebels seen him as quick as me,
  And the bullets buzzed like bees;
But he jumped for me, and shouldered me,
  Though a shot brought him once to his knees;
But he staggered up, and packed me off,
  With a dozen stumbles and falls,
Till safe in our lines he drapped us both,
  His black hide riddled with balls.

So, my gentle gazelles, thar's my answer,
  And here stays Banty Tim:
He trumped Death's ace for me that day,
  And I'm not goin' back on him!
You may rezoloot till the cows come home,
  But ef one of you tetches the boy,
He'll wrastle his hash to-night in hell,
  Or my name's not Tilmon Joy!

Bret Harte

(Francis) Bret Harte was born August 25, 1839, at Albany, New York. His childhood was spent in various cities of the East. Late in 1853 his widowed mother went to California with a party of relatives, and two months later, when he was fifteen, Bret Harte and his sister followed. He dreamed even at this age of being a poet. During the next few years he was engaged in school-teaching, typesetting, politics, mining and journalism, becoming editor of *The Overland Monthly* at San Francisco in 1868.

Harte's fame came suddenly. Late in the sixties he had written a burlesque in rhyme of two Western gamblers trying to fleece a guileless Chinaman who claimed to know nothing about cards but who, it turned out, was scarcely as innocent

as he appeared. Harte, in the midst of writing serious poetry, had put the verses aside as too crude and trifling for publication. Some time later, just as *The Overland Monthly* was going to press, it was discovered that the form was one page short. Having nothing else on hand, Harte had these rhymes set up. Instead of passing unnoticed, the poem was quoted everywhere; it swept the West and captivated the East. When *The Luck of Roaring Camp* followed, Harte became not only a national but an international figure. England acclaimed him and *The Atlantic Monthly* paid him $10,000 to write for a year in his Pike County vein.

East and West Poems appeared in 1871; in 1872 he published an enlarged *Poetical Works* including many earlier pieces. His scores of short stories represent Harte at his best; "M'liss," "Tennessee's Partner," "The Outcast of Poker Flat"—these are the work of a lesser, transplanted Dickens. His novels are of minor importance; they are carelessly constructed, theatrically conceived; his characters are little more than badly-wired marionettes that betray every movement made by their manipulator.

In 1872 Harte, encouraged by his success, returned to his native East; in 1878 he went to Germany as consul. Two years later he was transferred to Scotland and, after five years there, went to London, where he remained the rest of his life. Harte's later period remains mysteriously shrouded. He never came back to America, not even for a visit; he ceased to correspond with his family; he separated himself from all the most intimate associations of his early life. He died, suddenly, at Camberley, England, May 6, 1902.

"JIM"

Say there! P'r'aps
Some on you chaps
  Might know Jim Wild?

Well,—no offense:
Thar ain't no sense
  In gittin' riled!
Jim was my chum
  Up on the Bar:
That's why I come
  Down from up yar,
Lookin' for Jim.
Thank ye, sir! *You*
Ain't of that crew,—
  Blest if you are!
Money? Not much:
  That ain't my kind;
I ain't no such.
  Rum? I don't mind,
Seein' it's you.
Well, this yer Jim,—
Did you know him?
Jes' 'bout your size;
Same kind of eyes;—
Well, that is strange:
  Why, it's two year
  Since he came here,
Sick, for a change.
Well, here's to us:
    Eh?
The h—— you say!
    Dead?
That little cuss?

What makes you star',
You over thar?
Can't a man drop
's glass in yer shop
But you must r'ar?
  It wouldn't take
  D——d much to break
You and your bar.

  Dead!
Poor—little—Jim!
Why, thar was me,
Jones, and Bob Lee,
Harry and Ben,—
No-account men:
Then to take *him!*

Well, thar—Good-by.
No more, sir—I—
  Eh?
What's that you say?
Why, dern it!—sho!—
No? Yes! By Joe!
  Sold!
Sold! Why, you limb,
You ornery,
  Derned, old,
Long-legged Jim.

Bret Harte

PLAIN LANGUAGE FROM TRUTHFUL JAMES

(*Table Mountain, 1870*)

Which I wish to remark,
And my language is plain,
That for ways that are dark
And for tricks that are vain,
The heathen Chinee is peculiar,
Which the same I would rise to explain.

Ah Sin was his name;
And I shall not deny,
In regard to the same,
What that name might imply;
But his smile it was pensive and childlike,
As I frequent remarked to Bill Nye.

It was August the third,
And quite soft was the skies;
Which it might be inferred
That Ah Sin was likewise;
Yet he played it that day upon William
And me in a way I despise.

Which we had a small game,
And Ah Sin took a hand:
It was Euchre. The same
He did not understand;
But he smiled as he sat by the table,
With a smile that was childlike and bland.

Yet the cards they were stocked
  In a way that I grieve,
And my feelings were shocked
  At the state of Nye's sleeve,
Which was stuffed full of aces and bowers,
  And the same with intent to deceive.

But the hands that were played
  By that heathen Chinee,
And the points that he made,
  Were quite frightful to see,—
Till at last he put down a right bower,
  Which the same Nye had dealt unto me!

Then I looked up at Nye,
  And he gazed upon me;
And he rose with a sigh,
  And said, "Can this be?
We are ruined by Chinese cheap labor,"—
  And he went for that heathen Chinee.

In the scene that ensued
  I did not take a hand,
But the floor it was strewed
  Like the leaves on the strand
With the cards that Ah Sin had been hiding,
  In the game "he did not understand."

In his sleeves, which were long,
  He had twenty-four packs,—
Which was coming it strong,
  Yet I state but the facts;

And we found on his nails, which were taper,
What is frequent in tapers,—that's wax.

Which is why I remark,
And my language is plain,
That for ways that are dark
And for tricks that are vain,
The heathen Chinee is peculiar,—
Which the same I am free to maintain.

Joaquin Miller

Cincinnatus (Heine) Miller, or, to give him the name he adopted, Joaquin Miller, was born in 1841 of immigrant parents. As he himself writes, "My cradle was a covered wagon, pointed west. I was born in a covered wagon, I am told, at or about the time it crossed the line dividing Indiana from Ohio." When Miller was twelve, his family left the mid-West with "two big heavily laden wagons, with eight yoke of oxen to each, a carriage and two horses for mother and baby sister, and a single horse for the three boys to ride." The distance covered in their cross-country exodus (they took a roundabout route to Oregon) was nearly three thousand miles. The time consumed, he records, "was seven months and five days. There were no bridges, no railroad levels, nothing of the sort. . . . Many times, at night, after ascending a stream to find a ford, we could look back and see our smouldering camp-fires of the day before." This journey made a lasting impression on the boy's impressionable mind; it was this tortuous wandering that gave Miller his reverence for the spaciousness and glory of the West in general and the pioneer in particular. After two years in the Oregon home, he ran away to find gold.

Joaquin Miller

Beneath the sunset's golden sheaves
The awful deep walks with the deep,
Where silent sea-doves slip and sweep,
And commerce keeps her loom and weaves.
The dead red men refuse to rest;
Their ghosts illume my lurid West.

CROSSING THE PLAINS [1]

What great yoked brutes with briskets low,
With wrinkled necks like buffalo,
With round, brown, liquid, pleading eyes,
That turn'd so slow and sad to you,
That shone like love's eyes soft with tears,
That seem'd to plead, and make replies,
The while they bow'd their necks and drew
The creaking load; and looked at you.
Their sable briskets swept the ground,
Their cloven feet kept solemn sound.

Two sullen bullocks led the line,
Their great eyes shining bright like wine;
Two sullen captive kings were they,
That had in time held herds at bay,
And even now they crush'd the sod

[1] Permission to reprint this poem was granted by the Harr Wagner Publishing Co., San Francisco, California, publishers of Joaquin Miller's Complete Poetical Works.

Joaquin Miller

With stolid sense of majesty,
And stately stepp'd and stately trod,
As if 'twere something still to be
Kings even in captivity.

FROM *"BYRON"*

In men whom men condemn as ill
I find so much of goodness still,
In men whom men pronounce divine
I find so much of sin and blot,
I do not dare to draw a line
Between the two, where God has not.

Edward Rowland Sill

Edward Rowland Sill was born at Windsor, Connecticut, in 1841. In 1861 he was graduated from Yale and shortly thereafter his poor health compelled him West. After various unsuccessful experiments, he drifted into teaching, first in the high schools in Ohio, later in the English department of the University of California. His uncertain physical condition added to his mental uncertainty. Unable to ally himself either with the lethargic, conservative forces whom he hated or with the radicals whom he distrusted, Sill became an uncomfortable solitary; half rebellious, half resigned. During the last decade of his life, his brooding seriousness was less pronounced, a lighter irony took the place of his dark reflections.

The Hermitage, his first volume, was published in 1867, a later edition (including later poems) appearing in 1889. His two posthumous books are *Poems* (1887) and *Hermione and Other Poems* (1899).

Sill died, after bringing something of the Eastern culture to the West, in 1887.

Edward Rowland Sill

SOLITUDE

All alone—alone,
Calm, as on a kingly throne,
Take thy place in the crowded land,
Self-centred in free self-command.
Let thy manhood leave behind
The narrow ways of the lesser mind:
What to thee are its little cares,
The feeble love or the spite it bears?

Let the noisy crowd go by:
In thy lonely watch on high,
Far from the chattering tongues of men,
Sitting above their call or ken,
Free from links of manner and form
Thou shalt learn of the wingéd storm—
God shall speak to thee out of the sky.

DARE YOU?

Doubting Thomas and loving John,
Behind the others walking on:—

"Tell me now, John, dare you be
One of the minority?
To be lonely in your thought,
Never visited nor sought,
Shunned with secret shrug, to go
Thro' the world, esteemed its foe;

Edward Rowland Sill

To be singled out and hissed,
Pointed at as one unblessed,
Warned against in whispers faint,
Lest the children catch a taint;
To bear off your titles well,—
Heretic and infidel?
If you dare, come now with me,
Fearless, confident, and free."

"Thomas, do you dare to be
Of the great majority?
To be only, as the rest,
With Heaven's creature comforts blessed;
To accept, in humble part,
Truth that shines on every heart;
Never to be set on high,
Where the envious curses fly;
Never name or fame to find,
Still outstripped in soul and mind;
To be hid, unless to God,
As one grass-blade in the sod,
Underfoot with millions trod?
If you dare, come with us, be
Lost in love's great unity.

Sidney Lanier

Sidney Lanier was born at Macon, Georgia, February 3, 1842. His was a family of musicians (Lanier himself was a skilful performer on various instruments), and it is not surprising that

his verse emphasizes—even overstresses—the influence of music on poetry. He attended Oglethorpe College, graduating at the age of eighteen (1860), and, a year later, volunteered as a private in the Confederate army. After several months' imprisonment (he had been captured while acting as signal officer on a blockade-runner), Lanier was released in February, 1865, returning from Point Lookout to Georgia on foot, accompanied only by his flute, from which he refused to be separated. His physical health, never the most robust, had been frightfully impaired by his incarceration, and he was already suffering from tuberculosis, the rest of his life being spent in an unequal struggle against it.

He was now only twenty-three years old and the problem of choosing a vocation was complicated by his marriage in 1867. He spent five years in the study and practice of law, during which time he wrote comparatively little verse. But the law could not hold him; he felt premonitions of death and realized he must devote his talents to art before it was too late. He was fortunate enough to obtain a position as flautist with the Peabody Symphony Orchestra in 1873 in Baltimore, where he had free access to the music and literature he craved. Here he wrote all of his best poetry. In 1879, he was made lecturer on English in Johns Hopkins University, and it was for his courses there that he wrote his chief prose work, a brilliant if not conclusive study, *The Science of English Verse.* Besides his poetry, he wrote several books for boys, the two most popular being *The Boy's Froissart* (1878) and *The Boy's King Arthur* (1880).

Lanier's poetry, charming though most of it is, suffers from his all too frequent theorizing, his too-conscious effort to bring verse over into the province of pure music. He thought almost entirely, even in his most intellectual conceptions, in terms of musical form. His main theory that English verse has for its essential basis not *accent* but a strict musical *quantity* is a wholly erroneous conclusion, possible only to one who could write "whatever turn I have for art is purely musical—poetry

being with me a mere tangent into which I shoot." Lanier is at his best in his ballads, although a few of his lyrics have a similar spontaneity. In spite of the fact that he had rather novel schemes of rhythm and stanza-structure, much of his work is marred by strained effects, elaborate conceits and a kind of verse that approaches mere pattern-making. But such a vigorous ballad as "The Song of the Chattahoochee," lyrics like "Night and Day" and "The Stirrup Cup," and parts of the symphonic "Hymns of the Marshes" are sure of a place in American literature. Never a great figure, he was one of the most interesting and spiritual of our minor poets.

Lanier died, a victim of his disease, in the mountains of North Carolina, September 7, 1881.

SONG OF THE CHATTAHOOCHEE [1]

Out of the hills of Habersham,
Down the valleys of Hall,
I hurry amain to reach the plain,
Run the rapid and leap the fall,
Split at the rock and together again,
Accept my bed, or narrow or wide,
And flee from folly on every side
With a lover's pain to attain the plain
Far from the hills of Habersham,
Far from the valleys of Hall.

All down the hills of Habersham,
All through the valleys of Hall,
The rushes cried *Abide, abide,*
The willful waterweeds held me thrall,

[1] From *Poems of Sidney Lanier.* Copyright, 1884, 1891, 1916, by Mary D. Lanier; published by Charles Scribner's Sons. By permission of the publishers.

Sidney Lanier

The laving laurel turned my tide,
The ferns and the fondling grass said ***Stay,***
The dewberry dipped for to work delay,
And the little reeds sighed ***Abide, abide,***
Here in the hills of Habersham,
Here in the valleys of Hall.

High o'er the hills of Habersham,
Veiling the valleys of Hall,
The hickory told me manifold
Fair tales of shade, the poplar tall
Wrought me her shadowy self to hold,
The chestnut, the oak, the walnut, the pine,
Overleaning, with flickering meaning and sign,
Said, ***Pass not, so cold, these manifold***
Deep shades of the hills of Habersham,
These glades in the valleys of Hall.

And oft in the hills of Habersham,
And oft in the valleys of Hall,
The white quartz shone, and the smooth brook-stone
Did bar me of passage with friendly brawl,
And many a luminous jewel lone
—Crystals clear or acloud with mist,
Ruby, garnet and amethyst—
Made lures with the lights of streaming stone
In the clefts of the hills of Habersham,
In the beds of the valleys of Hall.

But oh, not the hills of Habersham,
And oh, not the valleys of Hall
Avail: I am fain for to water the plain.
Downward the voices of Duty call—
Downward, to toil and be mixed with the main,
The dry fields burn, and the mills are to turn,
And a myriad flowers mortally yearn,
And the lordly main from beyond the plain
Calls o'er the hills of Habersham,
Calls through the valleys of Hall.

NIGHT AND DAY[1]

The innocent, sweet Day is dead.
Dark Night hath slain her in her bed.
O, Moors are as fierce to kill as to wed!
—Put out the light, said he.

A sweeter light than ever rayed
From star of heaven or eye of maid
Has vanished in the unknown Shade
—She's dead, she's dead, said he.

Now, in a wild, sad after-mood
The tawny Night sits still to brood
Upon the dawn-time when he wooed
—I would she lived, said he.

[1] From *Poems of Sidney Lanier.* Copyright, 1884, 1891, 1916, by Mary D. Lanier; published by Charles Scribner's Sons. By permission of the publishers.

Sidney Lanier

Star-memories of happier times,
Of loving deeds and lovers' rhymes,
Throng forth in silvery pantomimes.
—Come back, O Day! said he.

FROM "THE MARSHES OF GLYNN"[1]

As the marsh-hen secretly builds on the watery sod,
Behold I will build me a nest on the greatness of God:
I will fly in the greatness of God as the marsh-hen flies
In the freedom that fills all the space 'twixt the marsh and the skies:
By so many roots as the marsh-grass sends in the sod
I will heartily lay me a-hold on the greatness of God:
Oh, like to the greatness of God is the greatness within
The range of the marshes, the liberal marshes of Glynn.

And the sea lends large, as the marsh: lo, out of his plenty the sea
Pours fast: full soon the time of the flood-tide must be:
Look how the grace of the sea doth go
About and about through the intricate channels that flow
Here and there,
Everywhere,
Till his waters have flooded the uttermost creeks and the low-lying lanes,
And the marsh is meshed with a million veins,

[1] From *Poems of Sidney Lanier*. Copyright, 1884, 1891, 1916, by Mary D. Lanier; published by Charles Scribner's Sons. By permission of the publishers.

That like as with rosy and silvery essences flow
In the rose-and-silver evening glow.
Farewell, my lord Sun!
The creeks overflow: a thousand rivulets run
'Twixt the roots of the sod; the blades of the marsh-grass stir;
Passeth a hurrying sound of wings that westward whirr;
Passeth, and all is still; and the currents cease to run;
And the sea and the marsh are one.

How still the plains of the waters be!
The tide in his ecstasy.
The tide is at his highest height:
And it is night.

And now from the Vast of the Lord will the waters of sleep
Roll in on the souls of men,
But who will reveal to our waking ken
The forms that swim and the shapes that creep
Under the waters of sleep?
And I would I could know what swimmeth below when the tide comes in
On the length and breadth of the marvellous marshes of Glynn.

Charles Edward Carryl

Charles Edward Carryl, father of Guy Wetmore Carryl (see page 142), was born in New York City, December 30, 1842. He was an officer and director in various railroads but found

leisure to write two of the few worthy rivals of the immortal *Alice in Wonderland.* These two, *Davy and the Goblin* (1884), which has gone through twenty printings, and *The Admiral's Caravan* (1891), contain many lively and diverting ballads as well as inspired nonsense verses in the manner of his model who, in spite of the slight difference in spelling, was also a Carroll.

C. E. Carryl lived the greater part of his life in New York, but on retiring from business, removed to Boston and lived there until his death, which occurred in the summer of 1920.

THE PLAINT OF THE CAMEL

"Canary-birds feed on sugar and seed,
Parrots have crackers to crunch;
And as for the poodles, they tell me the noodles
Have chickens and cream for their lunch.
But there's never a question
About MY digestion—
ANYTHING does for me!

"Cats, you're aware, can repose in a chair,
Chickens can roost upon rails;
Puppies are able to sleep in a stable,
And oysters can slumber in pails.
But no one supposes
A poor Camel dozes—
ANY PLACE does for me!

"Lambs are enclosed where it's never exposed,
Coops are constructed for hens;

Charles Edward Carryl

Kittens are treated to houses well heated,
And pigs are protected by pens.
But a Camel comes handy
Wherever it's sandy—
ANYWHERE does for me!

"People would laugh if you rode a giraffe,
Or mounted the back of an ox;
It's nobody's habit to ride on a rabbit,
Or try to bestraddle a fox.
But as for a Camel, he's
Ridden by families—
ANY LOAD does for me!

"A snake is as round as a hole in the ground;
Weasels are wavy and sleek;
And no alligator could ever be straighter
Than lizards that live in a creek.
But a Camel's all lumpy
And bumpy and humpy—
ANY SHAPE does for me!"

ROBINSON CRUSOE'S STORY

The night was thick and hazy
When the "Piccadilly Daisy"
Carried down the crew and captain in the sea;
And I think the water drowned 'em;
For they never, never found 'em
And I know they didn't come ashore with me.

Charles Edward Carryl

Oh! 'twas very sad and lonely
When I found myself the only
Population on this cultivated shore;
But I've made a little tavern
In a rocky little cavern,
And I sit and watch for people at the door.

I spent no time in looking
For a girl to do my cooking,
As I'm quite a clever hand at making stews;
But I had that fellow Friday,
Just to keep the tavern tidy,
And to put a Sunday polish on my shoes.

I have a little garden
That I'm cultivating lard in,
As the things I eat are rather tough and dry;
For I live on toasted lizards,
Prickly pears, and parrot gizzards,
And I'm really very fond of beetle-pie.

The clothes I had were furry,
And it made me fret and worry
When I found the moths were eating off the hair;
And I had to scrape and sand 'em,
And I boiled 'em and I tanned 'em,
Till I got the fine morocco suit I wear.

Charles Edward Carryl

I sometimes seek diversion,
In a family excursion
With the few domestic animals you see;
And we take along a carrot
As refreshment for the parrot,
And a little can of jungleberry tea.

Then we gather as we travel,
Bits of moss and dirty gravel,
And we chip off little specimens of stone;
And we carry home as prizes
Funny bugs, of handy sizes,
Just to give the day a scientific tone.

If the roads are wet and muddy
We remain at home and study,—
For the Goat is very clever at a sum,—
And the Dog, instead of fighting,
Studies ornamental writing,
While the Cat is taking lessons on the drum.

We retire at eleven,
And we rise again at seven;
And I wish to call attention, as I close,
To the fact that all the scholars
Are correct about their collars,
And particular in turning out their toes.

James Whitcomb Riley

James Whitcomb Riley, who was possibly the most widely read native poet of his day, was born October 7, 1849, in Greenfield, Indiana, a small town twenty miles from Indianapolis, where he spent his later years. Contrary to the popular belief, Riley was not, as many have gathered from his bucolic dialect poems, a struggling child of the soil; his father was a lawyer in comfortable circumstances and Riley was not only given a good education but was prepared for the law. His temperament, however, craved something more adventurous. At eighteen he shut the heavy pages of Blackstone, slipped out of the office and joined a traveling troupe of actors who sold patent medicines during the intermissions. Riley's functions were varied: he beat the bass-drum, painted their flaring banners, wrote local versions of old songs, coached the actors and, when occasion arose, took part in the performance himself.

Even before this time, Riley had begun to send verses to the newspapers, frank experiments, bits of homely sentiment, simple snatches and elaborate hoaxes—the poem "Leonainie," published over the initials "E. A. P.," being accepted in many quarters as a newly discovered poem by Poe. In 1882, when he was on the staff of the Indianapolis *Journal,* he began the series of dialect poems which he claimed were by a rude and unlettered farmer, one "Benj. F. Johnson, of Boone, the Hoosier poet"—printing long extracts from "Boone's" ungrammatical and badly-spelt letters to prove his find. A collection of these rustic verses appeared, in 1883, as *The Ole Swimmin' Hole;* and Riley leaped into widespread popularity.

Other collections followed rapidly: *Afterwhiles* (1887), *Old-Fashioned Roses* (1888), *Pipes o' Pan at Zekesbury* (1889), *Rhymes of Childhood* (1890). All met an instant response; Riley endeared himself, by his homely idiom and his childlike ingenuity, to a countryful of readers, adolescent and adult.

But Riley's simplicity is not always as artless as it seems. Time and again, one can see him trading wantonly on the emotions of his unsophisticated readers; he sees them about to smile—and broadens the point of his joke; he observes them on

the point of tears—and pulls out the sobbing *tremolo* stop. In many respects, he is patently the most artificial of those poets who claim to give us the stuff of the soil. He is the poet of obtrusive sentiment rather than of quiet convictions; of lulling assurance, of philosophies that never disturb his readers, of sweet truisms rather than searching truths.

That work of his which may endure, will survive because of the personal flavor that Riley often fused into it. Such poems as "When the Frost is on the Punkin'," "The Raggedy Man," "Our Hired Girl" are a part of American folk literature; "Little Orphant Annie" is read wherever there is a schoolhouse or, for that matter, a nursery. In 1912 the schools throughout the country observed his birthday.

Riley died in his little house in Lockerbie Street, Indianapolis, July 22, 1916.

"WHEN THE FROST IS ON THE PUNKIN"[1]

When the frost is on the punkin and the fodder's in the shock,
And you hear the kyouck and gobble of the struttin' turkey-cock,
And the clackin' of the guineys, and the cluckin' of the hens,
And the rooster's hallylooyer as he tiptoes on the fence;
O, it's then the time a feller is a-feelin' at his best,
With the risin' sun to greet him from a night of peaceful rest,

[1] From the Biographical Edition of the *Complete Works of James Whitcomb Riley*. Copyright, 1913. Used by special permission of the publishers, The Bobbs-Merrill Company.

As he leaves the house, bareheaded, and goes out to feed
the stock,
When the frost is on the punkin and the fodder's in the
shock.

They's something kindo' harty-like about the atmusfere
When the heat of summer's over and the coolin' fall is
here—
Of course we miss the flowers, and the blossoms on the
trees,
And the mumble of the hummin'-birds and buzzin' of
the bees;
But the air's so appetizin'; and the landscape through the
haze
Of a crisp and sunny morning of the airly autumn days
Is a pictur' that no painter has the colorin' to mock—
When the frost is on the punkin and the fodder's in the
shock.

The husky, rusty russel of the tossels of the corn,
And the raspin' of the tangled leaves as golden as the
morn;
The stubble in the furries—kindo' lonesome-like, but still
A-preachin' sermuns to us of the barns they growed to fill;
The strawstack in the medder, and the reaper in the shed;
The hosses in theyr stalls below—the clover overhead!—
O, it sets my hart a-clickin' like the tickin' of a clock,
When the frost is on the punkin and the fodder's in the
shock.

Then your apples all is gethered, and the ones a feller keeps
Is poured around the cellar-floor in red and yaller heaps;
And your cider-makin's over, and your wimmern-folks is through
With theyr mince and apple-butter, and theyr souse and sausage too! . . .
I don't know how to tell it—but ef such a thing could be
As the angels wantin' boardin', and they'd call around on *me*—
I'd want to 'commodate 'em—all the whole-indurin' flock—
When the frost is on the punkin and the fodder's in the shock.

A PARTING GUEST[1]

What delightful hosts are they—
Life and Love!
Lingeringly I turn away,
This late hour, yet glad enough
They have not withheld from me
Their high hospitality.
So, with face lit with delight
And all gratitude, I stay
Yet to press their hands and say,
"Thanks.—So fine a time! Good night."

[1] From the Biographical Edition of the *Complete Works of James Whitcomb Riley*. Copyright, 1913. Used by special permission of the publishers, The Bobbs-Merrill Company.

Eugene Field

Although born (September 3, 1850) in St. Louis, Missouri, Eugene Field belongs to the literature of the far West. Colorado and the Rocky Mountain region claimed him as their own and Field never repudiated the allegiance; he even called most of his poetry "Western Verse."

Field's area of education embraced New England, Missouri, and what European territory he could cover in six months. At twenty-three he became a reporter on the St. Louis *Evening Journal,* the rest of his life being given, with a dogged devotion, to journalism. Driven by the demands of his unique daily columns (those on the Denver *Tribune* [1881-1883] and the Chicago *Daily News* [1883-1895] were widely copied), Field first capitalized and then standardized his high spirits, his erudition, his whimsicality, his fondness for children. He wrote so often with his tongue in his cheek that it is difficult to say where true sentiment stops and an exaggerated sentimentality begins. "Field," says Fred Lewis Pattee, in his detailed study of *American Literature Since 1870,* "more than any other writer of the period, illustrates the way the old type of literary scholar was to be modified and changed by the newspaper. Every scrap of Field's voluminous product was written for immediate newspaper consumption. He patronized not at all the literary magazines, he wrote his books not at all with book intent—he made them up from newspaper fragments. . . . He was a pioneer in a peculiar province: he stands for the journalization of literature, a process that, if carried to its logical extreme, will make of the man of letters a mere newspaper reporter."

Though Field still may be overrated in some quarters, there is little doubt that certain of his child lyrics, his homely philosophic ballads (in the vein which Harte and Riley popularized) and his brilliant burlesques will occupy a niche in American letters. Readers of all tastes will find much to surprise and delight them in *A Little Book of Western Verse* (1889), *With Trumpet and Drum* (1892), *A Second Book of Verse* (1893) and those remarkable versions (and perversions)

of Horace, *Echoes from the Sabine Farm* (1893) written in collaboration with his equally adroit brother, Roswell M. Field. A complete one-volume edition of his verse was issued in 1910.

Field died in Chicago, Illinois, November 4, 1895.

OUR TWO OPINIONS [1]

Us two wuz boys when we fell out,—
  Nigh to the age uv my youngest now;
Don't rec'lect what 'twuz about,
  Some small deeff'rence, I'll allow.
Lived next neighbors twenty years,
  A-hatin' each other, me 'nd Jim,—
He having *his* opinyin uv *me,*
  'Nd *I* havin' *my* opinyin uv *him.*

Grew up together 'nd wouldn't speak,
  Courted sisters, 'nd marr'd 'em, too;
'Tended same meetin'-house oncet a week,
  A-hatin' each other through 'nd through!
But when Abe Linkern asked the West
  F'r soldiers, we answered,—me 'nd Jim, —
He havin' *his* opinyin uv *me,*
  'Nd *I* havin' *my* opinyin uv *him.*

But down in Tennessee one night
  Ther' wuz sound uv firin' fur away,
'Nd the sergeant allowed ther'd be a fight
  With the Johnnie Rebs some time nex' day;

[1] Reprinted from *The Complete Works of Eugene Field* by permission of Charles Scribner's Sons, holders of the copyright.

'Nd as I wuz thinkin' uv Lizzie 'nd home
Jim stood afore me, long 'nd slim,—
He havin' *his* opinyin uv *me,*
'Nd *I* havin' *my* opinyin uv *him.*

Seemed like we knew there wuz goin' to be
Serious trouble f'r me 'nd him;
Us two shuck hands, did Jim 'nd me,
But never a word from me or Jim!
He went *his* way 'nd *I* went *mine,*
'Nd into the battle's roar went we,—
I havin' *my* opinyin of Jim,
'Nd *he* havin' *his* opinyin uv *me.*

Jim never came back from the war again,
But I hain't forgot that last, last night
When, waitin' f'r orders, us two men
Made up 'nd shuck hands, afore the fight.
'Nd after it all, it's soothin' to know
That here I be 'nd younder's Jim,—
He havin' *his* opinyin uv *me,*
'Nd *I* havin' *my* opinyin uv *him.*

LITTLE BOY BLUE[1]

The little toy dog is covered with dust,
But sturdy and staunch he stands;
The little toy soldier is red with rust,
And his musket moulds in his hands.

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Eugene Field

Time was when the little toy dog was new,
And the soldier was passing fair;
And that was the time when our Little Boy Blue
Kissed them and put them there.

"Now don't you go till I come," he said,
"And don't you make any noise!"
So, toddling off to his trundle bed,
He dreamt of the pretty toys;
And, as he was dreaming, an angel song
Awakened our Little Boy Blue—
Oh! the years are many, the years are long,
But the little toy friends are true!

Ay, faithful to Little Boy Blue they stand,
Each in the same old place,
Awaiting the touch of a little hand,
The smile of a little face;
And they wonder, as waiting the long years through
In the dust of that little chair,
What has become of our Little Boy Blue,
Since he kissed them and put them there.

SEEIN' THINGS[1]

I ain't afraid uv snakes or toads, or bugs or worms or mice,
An' things 'at girls are skeered uv I think are awful nice!

[1] Reprinted from *The Complete Works of Eugene Field* by permission of Charles Scribner's Sons, holders of the copyright.

Eugene Field

I'm pretty brave I guess; an' yet I hate to go to bed,
For, when I'm tucked up warm an' snug an' when my
prayers are said,
Mother tells me " Happy Dreams " an' takes away the
light,
An' leaves me lyin' all alone an' seein' things at night!

Sometimes they're in the corner, sometimes they're by the
door,
Sometimes they're all a-standin' in the middle uv the floor;
Sometimes they are a-sittin' down, sometimes they're
walkin' round
So softly and so creepy-like they never make a sound!
Sometimes they are as black as ink, an' other times
they're white—
But color ain't no difference when you see things at night!

Once, when I licked a feller 'at had just moved on our
street,
An' father sent me up to bed without a bite to eat,
I woke up in the dark an' saw things standin' in a row,
A-lookin' at me cross-eyed an' p'intin' at me—*so!*
Oh, my! I wuz so skeered 'at time I never slep' a mite—
It's almost alluz when I'm bad I see things at night!

Lucky thing I ain't a girl or I'd be skeered to death!
Bein' I'm a boy, I duck my head an' hold my breath.
An' I am, oh *so* sorry I'm a naughty boy, an' then
I promise to be better an' I say my prayers again!
Gran'ma tells me that's the only way to make it right
When a feller has been wicked an' sees things at night!

Eugene Field

An' so when other naughty boys would coax me into sin,
I try to skwush the Tempter's voice 'at urges me within;
An' when they's pie for supper, or cakes 'at's big an' nice,
I want to—but I do not pass my plate f'r them things
twice!
No, ruther let Starvation wipe me slowly out o' sight
Than I should keep a-livin' on an' seein' things at night!

Edwin Markham

Edwin Markham was born in Oregon City, Oregon, April 23, 1852, the youngest son of pioneer parents. His father died before he had reached his fifth year and in 1857 he was taken by his mother to a wild valley in the Suisun Hills in central California. Here he grew to young manhood; farming, broncho-riding, laboring on a cattle ranch, educating himself in the primitive country schools and supplementing his studies with whatever books he could procure. At eighteen he determined to be a teacher and entered the State Normal School at San Jose. After some years he became superintendent and principal of various schools in that locality.

Since childhood, Markham had been writing verses of no extraordinary merit, one of his earliest pieces being a typically Bryonic echo (*A Dream of Chaos*) full of the high-sounding fustian of the period. Several years before he uttered his famous challenge, Markham was writing poems of protest, insurrectionary in theme but conventional in effect. Suddenly, in 1899, a new force surged through him; a sense of outrage at the inequality of human struggle voiced itself in the sweeping and sonorous poem, "The Man with the Hoe." (See Preface.) Inspired by Millet's painting, Markham made the bowed, broken French peasant a symbol of the poverty-stricken toiler in all lands—his was a protest not against labor but the drudgery, the soul-destroying exploitation of labor. "The Yeo-

man is the landed and well-to-do farmer," says Markham, "you need shed no tears for him. But here in the Millet picture is his opposite—the Hoeman: the landless, the soul-blighted workman of the world, the dumb creature that has no time to rest, no time to think, no time for the hopes that make us men." . . . "The Man with the Hoe," with its demand for a keener sense of social responsibility, was not wholly cast in the key of challenge. It looked to a more expansive future when "all workers will think and all thinkers will work"; it answered Music's great trio of B.'s (Bach, Beethoven, Brahms) with the need of a greater three: "Bread, Beauty and Brotherhood."

The success of the poem upon its appearance in the San Francisco *Examiner* (January 15, 1899) was instantaneous and universal. The lines appeared in every part of the globe; it was quoted and copied in every walk of life, in the literary world, the leisure world, the labor world. The same year of its publication, it was incorporated in Markham's first volume *The Man with the Hoe, and Other Poems* (1899). Two years later, his almost as well known poem was published. The same passion that fired Markham to champion the great common workers equipped him to write fittingly of the Great Commoner in *Lincoln, and Other Poems* (1901). His later volumes are dignified and melodious but scarcely remarkable. Never reaching the heights of his two early classics, there are, nevertheless, many moments of a related nobility in *The Shoes of Happiness* (1914) and *The Gates of Paradise* (1920).

Markham came East in 1901, his home being on Staten Island, New York.

OUTWITTED

He drew a circle that shut me out—
Heretic, rebel, a thing to flout.
But Love and I had the wit to win:
We drew a circle that took him in!

Edwin Markham

THE MAN WITH THE HOE[1]

(Written after seeing Millet's world-famous painting)

Bowed by the weight of centuries he leans
Upon his hoe and gazes on the ground,
The emptiness of ages in his face,
And on his back the burden of the world.
Who made him dead to rapture and despair,
A thing that grieves not and that never hopes,
Stolid and stunned, a brother to the ox?
Who loosened and let down this brutal jaw?
Whose was the hand that slanted back this brow?
Whose breath blew out the light within this brain?

Is this the Thing the Lord God made and gave
To have dominion over sea and land;
To trace the stars and search the heavens for power;
To feel the passion of Eternity?
Is this the dream He dreamed who shaped the suns
And marked their ways upon the ancient deep?
Down all the caverns of Hell to their last gulf
There is no shape more terrible than this—
More tongued with censure of the world's blind greed—
More filled with signs and portents for the soul—
More packt with danger to the universe.

What gulfs between him and the seraphim!
Slave of the wheel of labor, what to him

[1] Revised version, 1920. Copyright by Edwin Markham.

Are Plato and the swing of Pleiades?
What the long reaches of the peaks of song,
The rift of dawn, the reddening of the rose?
Through this dread shape the suffering ages look;
Time's tragedy is in that aching stoop;
Through this dread shape humanity betrayed,
Plundered, profaned, and disinherited,
Cries protest to the Judges of the World,
A protest that is also prophecy.

O masters, lords and rulers in all lands,
Is this the handiwork you give to God,
This monstrous thing distorted and soul-quenched?
How will you ever straighten up this shape;
Touch it again with immortality;
Give back the upward looking and the light;
Rebuild in it the music and the dream;
Make right the immemorial infamies,
Perfidious wrongs, immedicable woes?

O masters, lords and rulers in all lands,
How will the Future reckon with this man?
How answer his brute question in that hour
When whirlwinds of rebellion shake all shores?
How will it be with kingdoms and with kings—
With those who shaped him to the thing he is—
When this dumb Terror shall rise to judge the world,
After the silence of the centuries?

Edwin Markham

PREPAREDNESS

For all your days prepare,
And meet them ever alike:
When you are the anvil, bear—
When you are the hammer, strike.

LINCOLN, THE MAN OF THE PEOPLE *

When the Norn Mother saw the Whirlwind Hour
Greatening and darkening as it hurried on,
She left the Heaven of Heroes and came down
To make a man to meet the mortal need.
She took the tried clay of the common road—
Clay warm yet with the genial heat of earth,
Dasht through it all a strain of prophecy;
Tempered the heap with thrill of human tears;
Then mixt a laughter with the serious stuff.
Into the shape she breathed a flame to light
That tender, tragic, ever-changing face;
And laid on him a sense of the Mystic Powers,
Moving—all husht—behind the mortal vail.
Here was a man to hold against the world,
A man to match the mountains and the sea.

The color of the ground was in him, the red earth;
The smack and tang of elemental things:
The rectitude and patience of the cliff;
The good-will of the rain that loves all leaves;

* See pages 114, 123, 232, 245, 252, 323.

The friendly welcome of the wayside well;
The courage of the bird that dares the sea;
The gladness of the wind that shakes the corn;
The pity of the snow that hides all scars;
The secrecy of streams that make their way
Under the mountain to the rifted rock;
The tolerance and equity of light
That gives as freely to the shrinking flower
As to the great oak flaring to the wind—
To the grave's low hill as to the Matterhorn
That shoulders out the sky. Sprung from the West,
He drank the valorous youth of a new world.
The strength of virgin forests braced his mind,
The hush of spacious prairies stilled his soul.
His words were oaks in acorns; and his thoughts
Were roots that firmly gript the granite truth.

Up from log cabin to the Capitol,
One fire was on his spirit, one resolve—
To send the keen ax to the root of wrong,
Clearing a free way for the feet of God,
The eyes of conscience testing every stroke,
To make his deed the measure of a man.
He built the rail-pile as he built the State,
Pouring his splendid strength through every blow:
The grip that swung the ax in Illinois
Was on the pen that set a people free.

So came the Captain with the mighty heart;
And when the judgment thunders split the house,

Edwin Markham

Wrenching the rafters from their ancient rest,
He held the ridgepole up, and spiked again
The rafters of the Home. He held his place—
Held the long purpose like a growing tree—
Held on through blame and faltered not at praise.
And when he fell in whirlwind, he went down
As when a lordly cedar, green with boughs,
Goes down with a great shout upon the hills,
And leaves a lonesome place against the sky.

C. E. S. Wood

Charles Erskine Scott Wood was born at Erie, Pennsylvania, February 20, 1852, educated at the United States Military Academy (1874) and Columbia, where he received the degrees of Ph.B. and LL.B. in 1883. Wood served in the United States Army for almost ten years, acting as lieutenant in various campaigns against the Indians during 1877-8. He was admitted to the bar in 1884, practised at Portland, Oregon, and retired in 1919.

In 1901, he published *A Book of Tales, Being Myths of the North American Indians.* In 1904, his symbolic *A Masque of Love* appeared. His finest work, however, is *The Poet in the Desert* (1915), a sonorous pageant of protest from which the two selections have been taken.

SUNRISE

The lean coyote, prowler of the night,
Slips to his rocky fastnesses.
Jack-rabbits noiselessly shuttle among the sage-brush,
And, from the castellated cliffs,

Rock-ravens launch their proud black sails upon the day.
The wild horses troop back to their pastures.

The poplar-trees watch beside the irrigation-ditches.
Orioles, whose nests sway in the cotton-wood trees by the ditch-side, begin to twitter.
All shy things, breathless, watch
The thin white skirts of dawn,
The dancer of the sky,
Who trips daintily down the mountain-side
Emptying her crystal chalice. . . .
And a red-bird, dipped in sunrise, cracks from a poplar's top
His exultant whip above a silver world.

THE DESERT

She is a nun, withdrawing behind her veil;
Grey, mysterious, meditative, unapproachable.
Her body is tawny with the eagerness of the Sun
And her eyes are pools which shine in deep canyons.
She is a beautiful swart woman
With opals at her throat,
Rubies at her wrists
And topaz about her ankles.
Her breasts are like the evening and the day stars.

She sits upon her throne of light, proud and silent,
Indifferent to wooers.
The Sun is her servitor, the stars her attendants,
Running before her.
She sings a song unto her own ears,

C. E. S. Wood

Solitary but sufficient;
The song of her being.
She is a naked dancer, dancing upon
A pavement of porphyry and pearl,
Dazzling, so that the eyes must be shaded.
She wears the stars upon her bosom
And braids her hair with the constellations.

Irwin Russell

Irwin Russell was born, June 3, 1853, at Port Gibson, Mississippi, where he studied law and was admitted to the bar. His restless nature and wayward disposition drove him from one place to another, from dissipation to dissipation, from a not too rugged health to an utter breakdown. In July, 1879, he was forced to leave New York, working his way down to New Orleans on a coast steamer, trying to rehabilitate himself as reporter on the New Orleans *Picayune.* But illness pursued him and the following December Russell died, cut off, in the midst of his promise, before he had reached his twenty-seventh year.

Although Russell did not take his poetry seriously and though the bulk of it is small, its influence has been large. Thomas Nelson Page and Joel Chandler Harris have acknowledged their indebtedness to him; the creator of Uncle Remus writing, "Irwin Russell was among the first—if not the very first—of Southern writers to appreciate the literary possibilities of the negro character." He entered their life, appreciated their fresh turns of thought, saw things with that peculiar mixture of reverence and unconscious humor that is so integral a part of negro songs and spirituals. "Blessing the Dance" and "The Song of the Banjo" (from Russell's operetta *Christmas-Night in the Quarters,* possibly his best known work) are excellent

examples; faithful renderings of the mind of the old-fashioned, simple and sententious child of the plantation. In the latter poem the old story of Noah is told, with delightful additions, from the colorful angle of the darky; local in its setting, revealing in its quaint psychology.

A collection of his poems appeared, with an introduction by Joel Chandler Harris, in 1888. In 1917, a more inclusive volume, beautifully printed, with illustrations by E. W. Kemble, was published by The Century Co.; it was entitled *Christmas-Night in the Quarters.*

Russell died, in an obscure boarding house in New Orleans, December 23, 1879.

BLESSING THE DANCE

(From *Christmas-Night in the Quarters*)

O Mahsr! let dis gath'rin fin' a blessin' in yo' sight!
Don't jedge us hard fur what we does—yo' know it's
Chrismus-night;
An' all de balunce ob de yeah we does as right's we kin.
Ef dancin's wrong, O Mahsr! let de time excuse de sin!

We labors in de vin'ya'd, wukin' hard an' wukin' true;
Now, shorely yo' won't notus, ef we eats a grape or two,
An' takes a leetle holiday,—a leetle restin'-spell,—
Bekase, nex' week, we'll start in fresh, an' labor twicet
as well.

Remember, Mahsr,—min' dis now,—de sinfullness ob sin
Is 'pendin' 'pon de sperrit what we goes an' does it in;
An' in a righchis frame ob min' we's gwine to dance
an' sing,
A-feelin' like King David, when he cut de pigeon-wing.

It seems to me—indeed it do—I mebbe mout be wrong—
Dat people raly *ought* to dance, when Chrismus comes along;
Des dance bekase dey's happy—like de birds hops in de trees,
De pine-top fiddle soundin' to be bowin' ob de breeze.

We has no ark to dance afore, like Isrul's prophet king;
We has no harp to soun' de chords, to holp us out to sing;
But 'cordin' to de gif's we has we does de bes' we knows,
An' folks don't 'spise de vi'let-flower bekase it ain't de rose.

Yes, bless us, please, Sah, eben ef we's doin' wrong to-night;
Kase den we'll need de blessin' more'n ef we's doin' right;
An' let de blessin's stay wid us, untel we comes to die,
An' goes to keep our Chrismus wid dem sheriffs in de sky!

Yes, tell dem preshis anguls we's a-gwine to jine 'em soon:
Our voices we's a-trainin' fur to sing de glory tune;
We's ready when you wants us, an' it ain't no matter when.
O Mahsr! call yo' chillen soon, an' take 'em home! *Amen.*

DE FUST BANJO

Go 'way, fiddle! folks is tired o' hearin' you a-squawkin'.
Keep silence fur yo' betters! don't you heah de banjo talkin'?
About de 'possum's tail she's gwine to lecter—ladies, listen!
About de ha'r whut isn't dar, an' why de ha'r is missin':

"Dar's gwine to be a' oberflow," said Noah, lookin' solemn—
Fur Noah tuk de "Herald," an' he read de ribber column—
An' so he sot his hands to wuk a-clarin' timber-patches,
An' 'lowed he's gwine to build a boat to beat de steamah *Natchez.*

Ol' Noah kep' a-nailin' an' a-chippin' an' a-sawin';
An' all de wicked neighbors kep' a-laughin' an' a-pshawin';
But Noah didn't min' 'em, knowin' whut wuz gwine to happen:
An' forty days an' forty nights de rain it kep' a-drappin'.

Now, Noah had done cotched a lot ob ebry sort o' beas'es—
Ob all de shows a-trabbelin', it beat 'em all to pieces!
He had a Morgan colt an' sebral head o' Jarsey cattle—
An' druv 'em 'board de Ark as soon's he heered de thunder rattle.

Den sech anoder fall ob rain! It come so awful hebby,
De ribber riz immejitly, an' busted troo de lebbee;
De people all wuz drownded out—'cep' Noah an' de critters,
An' men he'd hired to wuk de boat—an' one to mix de bitters.

De Ark she kep' a-sailin' an' a-sailin' *an'* a-sailin';
De lion got his dander up, an' like to bruk de palin';
De sarpints hissed; de painters yelled; tel', whut wid all de fussin',
You c'u'dn't hardly heah de mate a-bossin' 'roun' an' cussin'.

Now Ham, de only nigger whut wuz runnin' on de packet,
Got lonesome in de barber-shop, an' c'u'dn't stan' de racket;
An' so, fur to amuse he-se'f, he steamed some wood an' bent it,
An' soon he had a banjo made—de fust dat wuz invented.

He wet de ledder, stretched it on; made bridge an' screws an' aprin;
An' fitted in a proper neck—'twuz berry long an' taprin';
He tuk some tin, an' twisted him a thimble fur to ring it:
An' den de mighty question riz: how wuz he gwine to string it?

De 'possum had as fine a tail as dis dat I's a-singin';
De ha'r's so long an' thick an' strong,—des fit fur banjo-
stringin';
Dat nigger shaved 'em off as short as washday-dinner
graces:
An' sorted ob 'em by de size—f'om little E's to basses.

He strung her, tuned her, struck a jig,—'twuz *"Nebber
min' de wedder,"*—
She soun' like forty-lebben bands a-playin' all togedder:
Some went to pattin'; some to dancin': Noah called de
figgers;
An' Ham he sot an' knocked de tune, de happiest ob
niggers!

Now, sence dat time—it's mighty strange—dere's not de
slightes' showin'
Ob any ha'r at all upon de 'possum's tail a-growin';
An' curi's, too, dat nigger's ways: his people nebber
los' 'em—
Fur whar you finds de nigger—dar's de banjo an' de
'possum!

Edith M. Thomas

Edith Matilda Thomas was born at Chatham, Ohio, August 12, 1854. She was educated in the Normal Institute at Geneva, Ohio, and has been living in New York since 1888.

Miss Thomas is the author of some dozen books of verse, most of them lightly lyrical in mood, although many of her individual poems have a spiritually dramatic quality. The best of her work may be found in *Lyrics and Sonnets* (1887) and *The Flower from the Ashes* (1915).

Edith M. Thomas

"FROST TO-NIGHT"

Apple-green west and an orange bar;
And the crystal eye of a lone, one star . . .
And, "Child, take the shears and cut what you will,
Frost to-night—so clear and dead-still."

Then I sally forth, half sad, half proud,
And I come to the velvet, imperial crowd,
The wine-red, the gold, the crimson, the pied,—
The dahlias that reign by the garden-side.

The dahlias I might not touch till to-night!
A gleam of shears in the fading light,
And I gathered them all,—the splendid throng,
And in one great sheaf I bore them along.

. . . . . .

In my garden of Life with its all late flowers
I heed a Voice in the shrinking hours:
"Frost to-night—so clear and dead-still" . . .
Half sad, half proud, my arms I fill.

George Edward Woodberry

George Edward Woodberry was born in Beverly, Mass., May 12, 1855, and studied at Harvard; his early efforts receiving the approval of James Russell Lowell. From 1891 to 1904 he was Professor of Comparative Literature at Columbia University, where he exercised a keen influence on many of the younger writers.

George Edward Woodberry

His work is decidedly romantic and classical in style, leaning heavily toward the Tennysonian tradition. Although there is an undercurrent of spiritual beauty throughout his poetry, he frequently loses his power of exaltation in a rhetoric that is both stilted and sentimental. His chief collections of verse are *The Flight and Other Poems* (1900), *Wild Eden* (1914) and *The Roamer and Other Poems* (1920). He has also written several books of essays, criticism and biography.

IMMORTAL LOVE

Immortal Love, too high for my possessing,—
  Yet, lower than thee, where shall I find repose?
  Long in my youth I sang the morning rose,
By earthly things the heavenly pattern guessing!
Long fared I on, beauty and love caressing,
  And finding in my heart a place for those
  Eternal fugitives; the golden close
Of evening folds me, still their sweetness blessing.

Oh, happy we, the first-born heirs of nature,
  For whom the Heavenly Sun delays his light!
He by the sweets of every mortal creature
  Tempers eternal beauty to our sight;
And by the glow upon love's earthly feature
  Maketh the path of our departure bright.

George Edward Woodberry

A SONG OF SUNRISE

(*On the Morning of the Russian Revolution*)

To those who drink the golden mist
  Whereon the world's horizons rest,
Who teach the peoples to resist
  The terrors of the human breast:—
By burning stake and prison-camp
  They lead the march of man divine,
Above whose head the sacred lamp
  Of liberty doth blaze and shine;
O'er blood and tears and nameless woe
  They hail far off the dawning light;
Through faith in them the nations go,
  Sun-smitten in the deepest night:—
Honor to them from East to West
  Be on the shouting earth to-day!
Holy their memory! Sweet their rest!
  Who fill the skies with freedom's ray!

H. C. Bunner

Henry Cuyler Bunner, one of our most delightful writers of light verse, was born at Oswego, New York, in 1855. At twenty-two he was appointed editor of *Puck* (then the most prominent of comic weeklies), a position which he held until his death. For more than ten years he wrote almost all the rhymed contributions to that journal—to say nothing of quantities of short stories (his *Short Sixes,* first published in 1890, are still well-known), prose paragraphs, topical parodies, edi-

torials, etc. Like Field, the artist was finally buried in the journalist; but, unlike him, Bunner kept the work of the serious poet separate from that of the manufacturer of satiric trifles. Yet, in spite of certain exquisite fragments in *Airs from Arcady* (1884) and *Rowen: Second Crop Songs* (1892), Bunner is likely to be remembered chiefly for his flippant *vers de société,* his skilful and grave absurdities.

"Behold the Deeds!" is a splendid example of Bunner's wit and technical ingenuity. It is a burlesque of the old ballads in the guise of a Chant-Royal, one of the strictest and most difficult of the French forms. Another of his uncollected comic pieces ("Shake, Mulleary and Go-ethe") owes it origin to the fact that a certain Western poet (Joaquin Miller) had composed a poem in which the name of the author of "Faust" was made to rhyme with "teeth." Bunner not only adopted this rhyme, but carried the broad satire further by mispronouncing Molière, achieving one of his happiest compositions.

Bunner's was, at best, an artificial world, a world of graceful compliments, polite evasions, rhymed *billets doux,* with light sighs and lighter laughter tinkling among the tea-cups. Bunner died, in New Jersey, in 1896.

SHAKE, MULLEARY AND GO-ETHE

I have a bookcase, which is what
Many much better men have not.
There are no books inside, for books,
I am afraid, might spoil its looks.
But I've three busts, all second-hand,
Upon the top. You understand
I could not put them underneath—
Shake, Mulleary and Go-ethe.

H. C. Bunner

Shake was a dramatist of note;
He lived by writing things to quote.
He long ago put on his shroud;
Some of his works are rather loud.
His bald-spot's dusty, I suppose.
I know there's dust upon his nose.
I'll have to give each nose a sheath—
Shake, Mulleary and Go-ethe.

Mulleary's line was quite the same;
He has more hair, but far less fame.
I would not from that fame retrench—
But he is foreign, being French.
Yet high his haughty head he heaves,
The only one done up in leaves,
They're rather limited on wreath—
Shake, Mulleary and Go-ethe.

Go-ethe wrote in the German tongue:
He must have learned it very young.
His nose is quite a butt for scoff,
Although an inch of it is off.
He did quite nicely for the Dutch;
But here he doesn't count for much.
They all are off their native heath—
Shake, Mulleary and Go-ethe.

They sit there, on their chests, as bland
As if they were not second-hand.
I do not know of what they think,
Nor why they never frown or wink.

H. C. Bunner

But why from smiling they refrain
I think I clearly can explain:
They none of them could show much teeth—
Shake, Mulleary and Go-ethe.

BEHOLD THE DEEDS!

(Being the Plaint of Adolphe Culpepper Ferguson, Salesman of Fancy Notions, held in durance of his Landlady for a "failure to connect" on Saturday night.)

I would that all men my hard case would know,
How grievously I suffer for no sin:
I, Adolphe Culpepper Ferguson, for lo!
I of my landlady am lockèd in
For being short on this sad Saturday,
Nor having shekels of silver wherewith to pay:
She turned and is departed with my key;
Wherefore, not even as other boarders free,
I sing, (as prisoners to their dungeon-stones
When for ten days they expiate a spree):
Behold the deeds that are done of Mrs. Jones!

One night and one day have I wept my woe;
Nor wot I, when the morrow doth begin,
If I shall have to write to Briggs & Co.,
To pray them to advance the requisite tin
For ransom of their salesman, that he may
Go forth as other boarders go alway—
As those I hear now flocking from their tea,

Led by the daughter of my landlady
Piano-ward. This day, for all my moans,
Dry-bread and water have been servèd me.
Behold the deeds that are done of Mrs. Jones!

Miss Amabel Jones is musical, and so
The heart of the young he-boarder doth win,
Playing "The Maiden's Prayer" *adagio*—
That fetcheth him, as fetcheth the "bunko skin"
The innocent rustic. For my part, I pray
That Badarjewska maid may wait for aye
Ere sits she with a lover, as did we
Once sit together, Amabel! Can it be
That all that arduous wooing not atones
For Saturday's shortness of trade dollars three?
Behold the deeds that are done of Mrs. Jones!

Yea! She forgets the arm that was wont to go
Around her waist. She wears a buckle whose pin
Galleth the crook of her young man's elbow.
I forget not, for I that youth have been!
Smith was aforetime the Lothario gay.
Yet once, I mind me, Smith was forced to stay
Close in his room. Not calm as I was he;
But his noise brought no pleasaunce, verily.
Small ease he got of playing on the bones
Or hammering on the stove-pipe, that I see.
Behold the deeds that are done of Mrs. Jones!

H. C. Bunner

Thou, for whose fear the figurative crow
I eat, accursed be thou and all thy kin!
Thee I will show up—yea, up I will show
Thy too-thick buckwheats and thy tea too thin.
Ay! here I dare thee, ready for the fray:
Thou dost *not* "keep a first-class house" I say!
It does not with the advertisements agree.
Thou lodgest a Briton with a puggaree,
And thou hast harbored Jacobses and Cohns,
Also a Mulligan. Thus denounce I thee!
Behold the deeds that are done of Mrs. Jones!

Envoy

Boarders! the worst I have not told to ye:
She hath stolen my trousers, that I may not flee
Privily by the window. Hence these groans.
There is no fleeing in a *robe de nuit.*
Behold the deeds that are done of Mrs. Jones!

A PITCHER OF MIGNONETTE [1]

A pitcher of mignonette
In a tenement's highest casement,—
Queer sort of flower-pot—yet
That pitcher of mignonette
Is a garden in heaven set,
To the little sick child in the basement—
The pitcher of mignonette,
In a tenement's highest casement.

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Lizette Woodworth Reese

Lizette Woodworth Reese was born January 9, 1856, at Baltimore, Maryland, where she has lived ever since. After an education obtained chiefly in private schools, she taught English in the Western High School at Baltimore.

Her first book, *A Branch of May* (1887), seems, at first glance, to be merely a continuation of the tradition of English minor verse, pleasant and impersonal. But an undercurrent of emotion, a quiet intensity, makes one go back to these simple lyrics and prepares the reader for the charm of the ensuing volumes.

A Handful of Lavender (1891), *A Quiet Road* (1896) and *A Wayside Lute* (1909) embody an artistry which, in spite of its old-fashioned contours, is as true as it is tender. A host of the younger lyricists owe much of their technique to her admirable models, and few modern sonneteers have equaled the blended music and symbolism of "Tears."

TEARS

When I consider Life and its few years—
A wisp of fog betwixt us and the sun;
A call to battle, and the battle done
Ere the last echo dies within our ears;
A rose choked in the grass; an hour of fears;
The gusts that past a darkening shore do beat;
The burst of music down an unlistening street,—
I wonder at the idleness of tears.
Ye old, old dead, and ye of yesternight,
Chieftains, and bards, and keepers of the sheep,
By every cup of sorrow that you had,
Loose me from tears, and make me see aright
How each hath back what once he stayed to weep:
Homer his sight, David his little lad!

Lizette Woodworth Reese

THE DUST

The dust blows up and down
Within the lonely town;
Vague, hurrying, dumb, aloof,
On sill and bough and roof.

What cloudy shapes do fleet
Along the parchèd street;
Clerks, bishops, kings go by—
Tomorrow so shall I.

SPICEWOOD

The spicewood burns along the gray, spent sky,
In moist unchimneyed places, in a wind,
That whips it all before, and all behind,
Into one thick, rude flame, now low, now high.
It is the first, the homeliest thing of all—
At sight of it, that lad that by it fares,
Whistles afresh his foolish, town-caught airs—
A thing so honey-colored and so tall!

It is as though the young Year, ere he pass,
To the white riot of the cherry tree,
Would fain accustom us, or here, or there,
To his new sudden ways with bough and grass,
So starts with what is humble, plain to see,
And all familiar as a cup, a chair.

Horace Traubel

Horace Traubel, often referred to as "Whitman's Boswell," was born in Camden, New Jersey, December 19, 1858, of mixed Jewish and Christian parentage. His scholastic education was desultory; after leaving school he sold newspapers, worked as an errand boy and helped his father in a stationery store. Later he became a printer's devil, proof-reader, reporter and editorial writer. In 1873 Walt Whitman came to Camden, little dreaming he would spend the remainder of his life there. He was almost friendless, a sick man, helpless and alone. The Traubel household welcomed him in and an extraordinary friendship sprang up immediately between the aging poet and the young boy. Traubel saw Whitman some part of each day for almost twenty years. "As the years fled," says David Karsner in his Life of Horace Traubel, "he catered to Whitman's needs in a hundred different ways. He would bring Old Walt such papers and magazines as he knew would interest him. He ran his errands . . . and assumed the details and responsibilities connected with the publishing of the later editions of Whitman's books." This intimacy is fully recorded in Traubel's chief work, a series of volumes, *With Walt Whitman in Camden,* a compilation of extraordinary value which has been called "Whitman's unconscious autobiography."

It is inevitable that Traubel's own poetry should betray the strong influence of his great friend and hero. And yet in several poems in *Optimos* (1910) and *Chants Communal* (1914) Traubel achieves a personal idiom; beneath the wearying length and repetitive phrases, he communicates the fire of the social revolutionist, the insurgent who wrote, "I build no fires to burn anybody up. I only build fires to light up the way."

Traubel died at Bon Echo, Ontario, Canada, where he had gone for his health, September 8, 1919.

Horace Traubel

HOW ARE YOU, DEAR WORLD, THIS MORNING?

How are you, dear world, this morning?
Clean from my bath of sleep,
Warm from the bosom of my mother star,
Recharged with the energy of my father self,
Restored from all derelict hours to the lawful service of time,
I come without gift or doctrine or tethering humor
To entertain your fateful will.

How are you, dear world, this morning?
I went to bed last night in the twist and snarl of a problem.
Have you awakened me to a revelation?
Has some change come upon the face of the earth and the heart of man?
Was life still busy while my life slept?
Was something done with the dreams of my sorrow and joy to transfigure in man the drag of his daily task?
Have all the prophets who died unfulfilled and all the plain men and women and children who burned or starved from injustice come back to earth to partake of a deferred feast?
What is it, dear world, I bring with empty hands to your morning?
What is it, dear world, you bring with hands as empty to my bedside?

Do the things that were stolen remain stolen?
Do the lives that were destroyed remain dead?
Do the stragglers who failed still fail?
Does the sleeper who slept the sleep of the merchant awake only to the merchant?
Does the law that was yesterday at my throat awake only to the law?
Does the singer awake only to sing, the artist to paint, and the orator to talk?
Or does the merchant awake to the man?
Or does the law of the state awake to the law of the heart?
Or do stolen things shift back into right relations?
Or is the singer silent, or does the artist put aside his paints, or has the orator stopt talking, because something greater than song or art or eloquence has appeared in the face of the multitude?

How are you, dear world, this morning?
We have had confidences other days but somehow the confidences of this day are sweetest of all,
They find me where I am remote, they seek me out where I am reluctant, they confirm me where I am weak,
They melt me down from flaw and angle into purity and circle,
They interpret me to last night's strangers and they introduce me to the real meanings of my vagrant past,
They remove me from my quarrels and they deliver me to truce and peace.

Frank Dempster Sherman

Besides being a writer of airy lyrics and epigrammatic quatrains, Sherman was an enthusiastic genealogist and a designer (especially of book-plates) of no little skill. As a poet, his gift was essentially that of a writer of light verse—fragrant, fragile, yet seldom too sentimental or brittle. Pleasant is the name for it, a pleasantness perfumed with a pungent wit.

Sherman never wearied of the little lyric; even the titles of his volumes are instances of his penchant for the brief melody, for the sudden snatch of song: *Madrigals and Catches* (1887), *Lyrics for a Lute* (1890), *Little-Folk Lyrics* (1892), *Lyrics of Joy* (1904). A sumptuous collected edition of his poems was published, with an Introduction by Clinton Scollard, in 1917.

AT MIDNIGHT

See, yonder, the belfry tower
  That gleams in the moon's pale light—
Or is it a ghostly flower
  That dreams in the silent night?

I listen and hear the chime
  Go quavering over the town,
And out of this flower of Time
  Twelve petals are wafted down.

BACCHUS

Listen to the tawny thief,
Hid beneath the waxen leaf,
Growling at his fairy host,
Bidding her with angry boast

Frank Dempster Sherman

Fill his cup with wine distilled
From the dew the dawn has spilled:
Stored away in golden casks
Is the precious draught he asks.

Who,—who makes this mimic din
In this mimic meadow inn,
Sings in such a drowsy note,
Wears a golden-belted coat;
Loiters in the dainty room
Of this tavern of perfume;
Dares to linger at the cup
Till the yellow sun is up?

Bacchus 'tis, come back again
To the busy haunts of men;
Garlanded and gaily dressed,
Bands of gold about his breast;
Straying from his paradise,
Having pinions angel-wise,—
'Tis the honey-bee, who goes
Reveling within a rose!

TWO QUATRAINS

IVY

Upon the walls the graceful Ivy climbs
  And wraps with green the ancient ruin gray:
Romance it is, and these her leafy rhymes
  Writ on the granite page of yesterday.

Frank Dempster Sherman

DAWN

Out of the scabbard of the night
  By God's hand drawn,
Flashes his shining sword of light,
  And lo—the dawn!

Charlotte P. S. Gilman

Charlotte Perkins Stetson Gilman was born at Hartford, Connecticut, July 3, 1860. She began public work in 1890, lecturing on ethics, economics and sociology; identifying herself with the labor question and the advance of women.

She has written about a dozen books, her best works being *Woman and Economics* (1898) and *Human Work* (1904). Her volume of verse, *In This Our World* (1898), hurls many a shaft of ironic wit. Beneath the whimsical humor of "A Conservative" and the better known "Similar Cases" (unfortunately too long to quote) there is a sub-acid satire not easily forgotten.

A CONSERVATIVE

The garden beds I wandered by
  One bright and cheerful morn,
When I found a new-fledged butterfly,
  A-sitting on a thorn,
A black and crimson butterfly
  All doleful and forlorn.

Charlotte P. S. Gilman

I thought that life could have no sting
To infant butterflies,
So I gazed on this unhappy thing
With wonder and surprise.
While sadly with his waving wing
He wiped his weeping eyes.

Said I, "What can the matter be?
Why weepest thou so sore?
With garden fair and sunlight free
And flowers in goodly store,"—
But he only turned away from me
And burst into a roar.

Cried he, "My legs are thin and few
Where once I had a swarm!
Soft fuzzy fur—a joy to view—
Once kept my body warm,
Before these flapping wing-things grew,
To hamper and deform!"

At that outrageous bug I shot
The fury of mine eye;
Said I, in scorn all burning hot,
In rage and anger high,
"You ignominious idiot!
Those wings are made to fly!"

"I do not want to fly," said he,
"I only want to squirm!"

And he drooped his wings dejectedly,
But still his voice was firm:
"I do not want to be a fly!
I want to be a worm!"

O yesterday of unknown lack,
To-day of unknown bliss!
I left my fool in red and black;
The last I saw was this,—
The creature madly climbing back
Into his chrysalis.

Louise Imogen Guiney

Louise Imogen Guiney was born at Boston, Massachusetts, in 1861. Although she attended Elmhurst Academy in Providence, most of her studying was with private tutors. In 1901 she went to England, where she lived until her death.

Traditional in form and feeling, Miss Guiney's work has a distinctly personal vigor; even her earliest collection, *The White Sail and Other Poems* (1887), is not without individuality. Her two most characteristic volumes are *A Roadside Harp* (1893) and *Patrins* (1897). A more recent publication, *Happy Ending,* appeared in 1909.

Miss Guiney died at Chirping-Camden, England, November 3, 1920.

THE WILD RIDE

I hear in my heart, I hear in its ominous pulses,
All day, on the road, the hoofs of invisible horses,
All night, from their stalls, the importunate pawing and neighing.

Louise Imogen Guiney

Let cowards and laggards fall back! But alert to the saddle
Weatherworn and abreast, go men of our galloping legion,
With a stirrup-cup each to the lily of women that loves him.

The trail is through dolor and dread, over crags and morasses;
There are shapes by the way, there are things that appal or entice us:
What odds? We are Knights of the Grail, we are vowed to the riding.

Thought's self is a vanishing wing, and joy is a cobweb,
And friendship a flower in the dust, and glory a sunbeam:
Not here is our prize, nor, alas! after these our pursuing.

A dipping of plumes, a tear, a shake of the bridle,
A passing salute to this world and her pitiful beauty;
We hurry with never a word in the track of our fathers.

I hear in my heart, I hear in its ominous pulses,
All day, on the road, the hoofs of invisible horses,
All night, from their stalls, the importunate pawing and neighing.

We spur to a land of no name, outracing the storm-wind;
We leap to the infinite dark like sparks from the anvil.
Thou leadest, O God! All's well with Thy troopers that follow.

Bliss Carman

(William) Bliss Carman was born at Fredericton, New Brunswick, Canada, April 15, 1861, of a long line of United Empire Loyalists who withdrew from Connecticut at the time of the Revolutionary War. Carman was educated at the University of New Brunswick (1879-81), at Edinburgh (1882-3) and Harvard (1886-8). He took up his residence in the United States about 1889 and, with the exception of short sojourns in the Maritime Provinces, has lived there ever since.

In 1893, Carman issued his first book, ***Low Tide on Grand Pré: A Book of Lyrics.*** It was immediately successful, running quickly into a second edition. From the outset, it was evident that Carman possessed the true lyrical power: the ability to fuse thought in emotion, to interpret the external world through a personal intensity. Simple and direct in his choice of themes, his passion made them universal. A vivid buoyancy, new to American literature, made his worship of Nature frankly pagan as contrasted to the moralizing tributes of most of his predecessors. This freshness and irresponsible whimsy made Carman the natural collaborator for Richard Hovey, and when their first joint ***Songs from Vagabondia*** appeared in 1894 Carman's fame was established. (See Preface.)

Although the three ***Vagabondia*** collections contain Carman's best known poems, several of his other volumes (he has published almost twenty of them) vibrate with the same glowing pulse. An almost physical radiance rises from ***Ballads of Lost Haven*** (1897), ***From the Book of Myths*** (1902) and ***Songs of the Sea Children*** (1904).

Carman has also written several volumes of essays and, in conjunction with Mary Perry King, has devised several poem-dances (*Daughters of Dawn,* 1913) suggesting Vachel Lindsay's later poem-games. In his collection ***April Airs*** (1916), although the strength is diluted and the music somewhat thinned, the old magic persists; the spell may be overfamiliar but it is not powerless.

Bliss Carman

A VAGABOND SONG

There is something in the autumn that is native to my blood—
Touch of manner, hint of mood;
And my heart is like a rhyme,
With the yellow and the purple and the crimson keeping time.

The scarlet of the maples can shake me like a cry
Of bugles going by.
And my lonely spirit thrills
To see the frosty asters like a smoke upon the hills.

There is something in October sets the gypsy blood astir;
We must rise and follow her,
When from every hill of flame
She calls and calls each vagabond by name.

THE GRAVEDIGGER

Oh, the shambling sea is a sexton old,
And well his work is done.
With an equal grave for lord and knave,
He buries them every one.

Then hoy and rip, with a rolling hip,
He makes for the nearest shore;
And God, who sent him a thousand ship,
Will send him a thousand more;

But some he'll save for a bleaching grave,
And shoulder them in to shore,—
Shoulder them in, shoulder them in,
Shoulder them in to shore.

Oh, the ships of Greece and the ships of Tyre
Went out, and where are they?
In the port they made, they are delayed
With the ships of yesterday.

He followed the ships of England far,
As the ships of long ago;
And the ships of France they led him a dance,
But he laid them all arow.

Oh, a loafing, idle lubber to him
Is the sexton of the town;
For sure and swift, with a guiding lift,
He shovels the dead men down.

But though he delves so fierce and grim,
His honest graves are wide,
As well they know who sleep below
The dredge of the deepest tide.

Oh, he works with a rollicking stave at lip,
And loud is the chorus skirled;
With the burly rote of his rumbling throat
He batters it down the world.

He learned it once in his father's house,
Where the ballads of eld were sung;
And merry enough is the burden rough,
But no man knows the tongue.

Oh, fair, they say, was his bride to see,
And wilful she must have been,
That she could bide at his gruesome side
When the first red dawn came in.

And sweet, they say, is her kiss to those
She greets to his border home;
And softer than sleep her hand's first sweep
That beckons, and they come.

Oh, crooked is he, but strong enough
To handle the tallest mast;
From the royal barque to the slaver dark,
He buries them all at last.

Then hoy and rip, with a rolling hip,
He makes for the nearest shore;
And God, who sent him a thousand ship,
Will send him a thousand more;
But some he'll save for a bleaching grave,
And shoulder them in to shore,—
Shoulder them in, shoulder them in,
Shoulder them in to shore.

HEM AND HAW

Hem and Haw were the sons of sin,
Created to shally and shirk;
Hem lay 'round and Haw looked on
While God did all the work.

Hem was a fogy, and Haw was a prig,
For both had the dull, dull mind;
And whenever they found a thing to do,
They yammered and went it blind.

Hem was the father of bigots and bores;
As the sands of the sea were they.
And Haw was the father of all the tribe
Who criticize to-day.
But God was an artist from the first,
And knew what he was about;
While over his shoulder sneered these two,
And advised him to rub it out.

They prophesied ruin ere man was made;
"Such folly must surely fail!"
And when he was done, "Do you think, my Lord,
He's better without a tail?"

And still in the honest working world,
With posture and hint and smirk,
These sons of the devil are standing by
While man does all the work.

Bliss Carman

They balk endeavor and baffle reform,
In the sacred name of law;
And over the quavering voice of Hem
Is the droning voice of Haw.

DAISIES

Over the shoulders and slopes of the dune
I saw the white daisies go down to the sea,
A host in the sunshine, an army in June,
The people God sends us to set our hearts free.

The bobolinks rallied them up from the dell,
The orioles whistled them out of the wood;
And all of their singing was, " Earth, it is well! "
And all of their dancing was, " Life, thou art good! "

Richard Burton

Richard (Eugene) Burton was born at Hartford, Connecticut, [arch 14, 1861. He has taught English at various colleges ıd universities since 1888, and has been head of the English :partment of the University of Minnesota since 1906. His :st book, *Dumb in June* (1895), is, in many ways, his best. It ıntains a buoyant lyricism, a more conscious use of the strain :veloped in Carman and Hovey's *Songs from Vagabondia*—a ood which he has never surpassed. Much of his other verse far less distinctive, being what might be called " anonymous ıetry ": a poetry that has, in spite of certain excellent qualities, ttle trace of the individual and practically no stamp of per- ınality or place. The succeeding *Lyrics of Brotherhood* (1899) ıs a wider vision if a more limited music; several of the poems

in this collection reflect the hungers, dreams and unsung melodies of the dumb and defeated multitudes. *From the Book of Life* (1909) has scarcely as much power and less poetry.

Besides his verse, Burton has written several books of essays, a life of Whittier and various volumes on the drama.

BLACK SHEEP

From their folded mates they wander far,
  Their ways seem harsh and wild;
They follow the beck of a baleful star,
  Their paths are dream-beguiled.

Yet haply they sought but a wider range,
  Some loftier mountain-slope,
And little recked of the country strange
  Beyond the gates of hope.

And haply a bell with a luring call
  Summoned their feet to tread
Midst the cruel rocks, where the deep pitfall
  And the lurking snare are spread.

Maybe, in spite of their tameless days
  Of outcast liberty,
They're sick at heart for the homely ways
  Where their gathered brothers be.

And oft at night, when the plains fall dark
  And the hills loom large and dim,
For the Shepherd's voice they mutely hark,
  And their souls go out to him.

Richard Burton

Meanwhile, " Black sheep! Black sheep! " we cry,
  Safe in the inner fold;
And maybe they hear, and wonder why,
  And marvel, out in the cold.

Oliver Herford

Oliver Herford was born in December, 1863, at Manchester, England. He studied art in London and at Julien's in Paris, turned to literature as a pastime and, about 1890, came to the United States, where he has lived ever since.

Herford, celebrated as a wit as well as a draughtsman and versifier, is the author of no less than twenty volumes of light verse, prose pasquinades and burlesques. His *The Bashful Earthquake* (1898), *Rubaiyat of a Persian Kitten* (1904) and *This Giddy Globe* (1919) show Herford's delicate skill and his versatile dexterity. These volumes, like most of Herford's, are embellished by his own drawings, which are fully as graceful as the accompanying verses.

EARTH [1]

If this little world to-night
  Suddenly should fall through space
In a hissing, headlong flight,
  Shrivelling from off its face,
As it falls into the sun,
  In an instant every trace
Of the little crawling things—
  Ants, philosophers, and lice,

[1] Reprinted from *The Bashful Earthquake* by Oliver Herford. Copyright, 1898, by Charles Scribner's Sons.

Oliver Herford

Cattle, cockroaches, and kings,
  Beggars, millionaires, and mice,
Men and maggots all as one
As it falls into the sun. . . .
Who can say but at the same
  Instant from some planet far,
A child may watch us and exclaim:
  "See the pretty shooting star!"

THE ELF AND THE DORMOUSE

Under a toadstool crept a wee Elf,
Out of the rain to shelter himself.

Under the toadstool, sound asleep,
Sat a big Dormouse all in a heap.

Trembled the wee Elf, frightened and yet
Fearing to fly away lest he get wet.

To the next shelter—maybe a mile!
Sudden the wee Elf smiled a wee smile.

Tugged till the toadstool toppled in two.
Holding it over him, gaily he flew.

Soon he was safe home, dry as could be.
Soon woke the Dormouse—"Good gracious me!

"Where is my toadstool?" loud he lamented.
—And that's how umbrellas first were invented.

Richard Hovey

Richard Hovey was born in 1864 at Normal, Illinois, and graduated from Dartmouth in 1885. After leaving college, he became, in rapid succession, a theologian, an actor, a journalist, a lecturer, a professor of English literature at Barnard, a poet and a dramatist.

His first volume, *The Laurel: An Ode* (1889), betrayed the overmusical influence of Lanier and gave promise of that extraordinary facility which often brought Hovey perilously close to the pit of mere technique. His exuberant virility found its outlet in the series of poems published in collaboration with Bliss Carman—the three volumes of *Songs from Vagabondia* (1894, 1896, 1900). Here he let himself go completely; nothing remained sober or static. His lines fling themselves across the page; dance with intoxicating abandon; shout with a wild irresponsibility; leap, laugh, carouse and carry off the reader in a gale of high spirits. The famous *Stein Song* is but an interlude in the midst of a far finer and even more rousing poem that, with its flavor of Whitman, begins:

I said in my heart, "I am sick of four walls and a ceiling.
I have need of the sky.
I have business with the grass.
I will up and get me away where the hawk is wheeling,
Lone and high,
And the slow clouds go by.
I will get me away to the waters that glass
The clouds as they pass. . . ."

Hovey's attitude to his art may be expressed in no better way than his own words concerning the poet: "It is not his mission," wrote Hovey in the *Dartmouth Magazine,* "to write elegant canzonettas for the delectation of the *dilettanti,* but to comfort the sorrowful and hearten the despairing, to champion the oppressed and declare to humanity its inalienable rights, to lay open to the world the heart of man—all its heights and depths, all its glooms and glories, to reveal the beauty in things and breathe into his fellows a love of it." This almost too con-

scious awareness of the poet's "mission" often marred Hovey's work; in responding to his program, he frequently overstressed his ringing enthusiasm, strained his own muscularity. But his power was as unflagging as his fraternal energy was persuasive. And in certain quieter moods the poet rose to new heights. The work on which he was engaged at the time of his death is significant; *Launcelot and Guenevere: A Poem in Five Dramas* is magnificent in its restrained vitality.

Although the varied lyrics in *Songs from Vagabondia* are the best known examples of Hovey, a more representative collection of his riper work may be found in *Along the Trail* (1898). This volume contains "Spring" and the stirring "Comrades" in full as well as the best of his vivid fragments.

Hovey died, during his thirty-sixth year, in 1900.

AT THE CROSSROADS

You to the left and I to the right,
For the ways of men must sever—
And it well may be for a day and a night,
And it well may be forever.
But whether we meet or whether we part
(For our ways are past our knowing),
A pledge from the heart to its fellow heart
On the ways we all are going!
Here's luck!
For we know not where we are going.

Whether we win or whether we lose
With the hands that life is dealing,
It is not we nor the ways we choose
But the fall of the cards that's sealing.

Richard Hovey

There's a fate in love and a fate in fight,
And the best of us all go under—
And whether we're wrong or whether we're right,
We win, sometimes, to our wonder.
Here's luck!
That we may not yet go under!

With a steady swing and an open brow
We have tramped the ways together,
But we're clasping hands at the crossroads now
In the Fiend's own night for weather;
And whether we bleed or whether we smile
In the leagues that lie before us
The ways of life are many a mile
And the dark of Fate is o'er us.
Here's luck!
And a cheer for the dark before us!

You to the left and I to the right,
For the ways of men must sever,
And it well may be for a day and a night
And it well may be forever!
But whether we live or whether we die
(For the end is past our knowing),
Here's two frank hearts and the open sky,
Be a fair or an ill wind blowing!
Here's luck!
In the teeth of all winds blowing.

Richard Hovey

UNMANIFEST DESTINY

To what new fates, my country, far
  And unforeseen of foe or friend,
Beneath what unexpected star
  Compelled to what unchosen end,

Across the sea that knows no beach,
  The Admiral of Nations guides
Thy blind obedient keels to reach
  The harbor where thy future rides!

The guns that spoke at Lexington
  Knew not that God was planning then
The trumpet word of Jefferson
  To bugle forth the rights of men.

To them that wept and cursed Bull Run,
  What was it but despair and shame?
Who saw behind the cloud the sun?
  Who knew that God was in the flame?

Had not defeat upon defeat,
  Disaster on disaster come,
The slave's emancipated feet
  Had never marched behind the drum.

There is a Hand that bends our deeds
  To mightier issues than we planned;
Each son that triumphs, each that bleeds,
  My country, serves It's dark command.

Richard Hovey

I do not know beneath what sky
  Nor on what seas shall be thy fate;
I only know it shall be high,
  I only know it shall be great.

LOVE IN THE WINDS

When I am standing on a mountain crest,
Or hold the tiller in the dashing spray,
My love of you leaps foaming in my breast,
Shouts with the winds and sweeps to their foray.
My heart bounds with the horses of the sea
And plunges in the wild ride of the night,
Flaunts in the teeth of tempest the large glee
That rides out Fate and welcomes gods to fight.

Ho, love, I laugh aloud for love of you,
Glad that our love is fellow to rough weather,—
No fretful orchid hothoused from the dew,
But hale and hardy as the highland heather,
  Rejoicing in the wind that stings and thrills,
  Comrade of ocean, playmate of the hills.

A STEIN SONG

(*From "Spring"*)

Give a rouse, then, in the Maytime
  For a life that knows no fear!
Turn night-time into daytime
  With the sunlight of good cheer!

Richard Hovey

For it's always fair weather
When good fellows get together,
With a stein on the table and a good song ringing clear.

When the wind comes up from Cuba,
And the birds are on the wing,
And our hearts are patting juba
To the banjo of the spring,
Then it's no wonder whether
The boys will get together,
With a stein on the table and a cheer for everything.

For we're all frank-and-twenty
When the spring is in the air;
And we've faith and hope a-plenty,
And we've life and love to spare:
And it's birds of a feather
When we all get together,
With a stein on the table and a heart without a care.

For we know the world is glorious,
And the goal a golden thing,
And that God is not censorious
When his children have their fling;
And life slips its tether
When the boys get together,
With a stein on the table in the fellowship of spring.

Madison Cawein

Madison (Julius) Cawein was born in Louisville, Kentucky, in 1865, and spent most of his life in the state of his birth. He wrote an enormous quantity of verse, publishing more than twenty volumes of pleasant, sometimes exuberant but seldom distinguished poetry. *Lyrics and Idyls* (1890) and *Vale of Tempe* (1905) contain his most characteristic stanzas, packed with the lush, adjectival love of Nature that led certain of his admirers to call him (and, one must admit, the alliteration was tempting) "the Keats of Kentucky."

Cawein's work divides itself into two distinct veins. In the one, he dealt with the scenes and incidents of his mountain environment: the sag of an old house in the hills, the echoes of a feud, rumblings of the Ku Klux Klan, the ghastly details of a lynching. In his other mood (the one which unfortunately possessed him the greater part of the time) he spent page after page romanticizing Nature, touching up his already painted lilies, polishing his thinly-plated artificialities until the base metal showed through. He pictured all outdoors with painstaking detail. And yet it is somehow unreal, prettified, remote. Every now and then, with an irritating frequency, he tries to transport his audience to a literary Fairyland; but the reader is quickly wearied by the almost interminable procession of fays, gnomes, nixies, elves, dryads, sprites, pucks, fauns—be they ever so lyrical.

In spite of Cawein's too profuse lyricism, several of his pieces will doubtless remain, though it is not likely that the survivors will be the sugared sweetmeats by which his champions (including William Dean Howells) set such store.

Cawein died in Kentucky in 1914.

Madison Cawein

SNOW

The moon, like a round device
On a shadowy shield of war,
Hangs white in a heaven of ice
With a solitary star.

The wind has sunk to a sigh,
And the waters are stern with frost;
And gray, in the eastern sky,
The last snow-cloud is lost.

White fields, that are winter-starved,
Black woods, that are winter-fraught,
Cold, harsh as a face death-carved,
With the iron of some black thought.

THE MAN HUNT[1]

The woods stretch wild to the mountain side,
And the brush is deep where a man may hide.

They have brought the bloodhounds up again
To the roadside rock where they found the slain.

They have brought the bloodhounds up, and they
Have taken the trail to the mountain way.

[1] Taken by permission from *The Vale of Tempe* by Madison Cawein. Copyright, 1905, by E. P. Dutton and Co., New York.

Three times they circled the trail and crossed,
And thrice they found it and thrice they lost.

Now straight through the pines and the underbrush
They follow the scent through the forest's hush.

And their deep-mouthed bay is a pulse of fear
In the heart of the wood that the man must hear.

The man who crouches among the trees
From the stern-faced men that follow these.

A huddle of rocks that the ooze has mossed—
And the trail of the hunted again is lost.

An upturned pebble; a bit of ground
A heel has trampled—the trail is found.

And the woods re-echo the bloodhounds' bay
As again they take to the mountain way.

A rock; a ribbon of road; a ledge,
With a pine-tree clutching its crumbling edge.

A pine, that the lightning long since clave,
Whose huge roots hollow a ragged cave.

A shout; a curse; and a face aghast,
And the human quarry is laired at last.

258264

The human quarry, with clay-clogged hair
And eyes of terror, who waits them there;

That glares and crouches and rising then
Hurls clods and curses at dogs and men.

Until the blow of a gun-butt lays
Him stunned and bleeding upon his face.

A rope, a prayer, and an oak-tree near.
And a score of hands to swing him clear.

A grim black thing for the setting sun
And the moon and the stars to look upon.

PENURY

Above his misered embers, gnarled and gray,
With toil-twitched limbs he bends; around his hut,
Want, like a hobbling hag, goes night and day,
Scolding at windows and at doors tight-shut.

DESERTED

The old house leans upon a tree
  Like some old man upon a staff:
The night wind in its ancient porch
  Sounds like a hollow laugh.

Madison Cawein

The heaven is wrapped in flying clouds.
  As grandeur cloaks itself in gray:
The starlight flitting in and out,
  Glints like a lanthorn ray.

The dark is full of whispers. Now
  A fox-hound howls: and through the night,
Like some old ghost from out its grave,
  The moon comes misty white.

Bert Leston Taylor

Bert Leston Taylor was born at Goshen, Massachusetts, November 13, 1866, and educated at the College of the City of New York. He had been engaged in journalism since 1895, conducting his column "A Line o' Type or Two" in the Chicago *Daily News*. He was the author of two novels as well as *A Line-o'-Verse or Two* (1911) and *Motley Measures* (1913), a pair of delightful light verse collections.

Taylor died of pneumonia March 19, 1921.

CANOPUS

When quacks with pills political would dope us,
  When politics absorbs the livelong day,
I like to think about that star Canopus,
  So far, so far away.

Greatest of visioned suns, they say who list 'em;
  To weigh it, science almost must despair.
Its shell would hold our whole dinged solar system,
  Nor even know 'twas there.

Bert Leston Taylor

When temporary chairmen utter speeches,
  And frenzied henchmen howl their battle hymns,
My thoughts float out across the cosmic reaches
  To where Canopus swims.

When men are calling names and making faces,
  And all the world's ajangle and ajar,
I meditate on interstellar spaces
  And smoke a mild seegar.

For after one has had about a week of
  The argument of friends as well as foes,
A star that has no parallax to speak of
  Conduces to repose.

William Vaughn Moody

William Vaughn Moody was born at Spencer, Indiana, July 1, 1869, and was educated at Harvard. After graduation, he spent the remaining eighteen years of his life in travel and intensive study—he taught, for eight years, at the University of Chicago—his death coming at the very height of his creative power.

The Masque of Judgment, his first work, was published in 1900. A richer and more representative collection appeared the year following; in *Poems* (1901) Moody effected that mingling of challenging lyricism and spiritual philosophy which becomes more and more insistent. (See Preface.) Throughout his career, and particularly in such lines as the hotly expostulating "On a Soldier Fallen in the Philippines" and the majestic, uncompleted "The Death of Eve," Moody successfully achieves the rare union of poet and preacher. "Gloucester Moors" is an outcry against the few exploiting the many; "The Quarry" and "An Ode in Time of Hesitation" are passionate with prophecy. His last, extended works have an epic quality which,

with their too-crowded details and difficult diction, will effectually prevent them from ever becoming popular. But their importance will grow even as Moody's place in our literature will eventually be a higher one than that which has yet been accorded him.

His prose play *The Great Divide* (1907) was strikingly successful when produced by Henry Miller. *The Faith Healer* (1909), another play in prose, because of its more exalted tone, did not win the favor of the theatre-going public. A complete edition of *The Poems and Poetic Dramas of William Vaughn Moody* was published in 1912 in two volumes.

In the summer of 1909 Moody was stricken with the illness from which he never recovered. He died in October, 1910.

FROM "JETSAM"

Once at a simple turning of the way
I met God walking; and although the dawn
Was large behind Him, and the morning stars
Circled and sang about his face as birds
About the fieldward morning cottager,
My coward heart said faintly, "Let us haste!
Day grows and it is far to market-town."
Once where I lay in darkness after fight,
Sore smitten, thrilled a little thread of song
Searching and searching all my muffled sense
Until it shook sweet pangs through all my blood,
And I beheld one globed in ghostly fire
Singing, star-strong, her golden canticle;
And her mouth sang, "The hosts of Hate roll past,
A uance of dust-motes in the sliding sun;
Love's battle comes on the wide wings of storm,
From east to west one legion! Wilt thou strive?"

Then, since the splendor of her sword-bright gaze
Was heavy on me with yearning and with scorn,
My sick heart muttered, "Yea, the little strife,
Yet see, the grievous wounds! I fain would sleep."

O heart, shalt thou not once be strong to go
Where all sweet throats are calling, once be brave
To slake with deed thy dumbness? Let us go
The path her singing face looms low to point,
Pendulous, blanched with longing, shedding flames
Of silver on the brown grope of the flood;
For all my spirit's soilure is put by
And all my body's soilure, lacking now
But the last lustral sacrament of death
To make me clean for those near-searching eyes
That question yonder whether all be well,
And pause a little ere they dare rejoice.

Question and be thou answered, passionate face!
For I am worthy, worthy now at last
After so long unworth; strong now at last
To give myself to beauty and be saved.

PANDORA'S SONG

(*From "The Fire-Bringer"*)

I stood within the heart of God;
It seemed a place I had known:
(I was blood-sister to the clod,
Blood-brother to the stone.)

William Vaughn Moody

I found my love and labor there,
My house, my raiment, meat and wine,
My ancient rage, my old despair,—
Yea, all things that were mine.

I saw the spring and summer pass,
The trees grow bare, and winter come;
All was the same as once it was
Upon my hills at home.

Then suddenly in my own heart
I felt God walk and gaze about;
He spoke; his words seemed held apart
With gladness and with doubt.

"Here is my meat and wine," He said,
"My love, my toil, my ancient care;
Here is my cloak, my book, my bed,
And here my old despair.

"Here are my seasons: winter, spring,
Summer the same, and autumn spills
The fruits I look for; everything
As on my heavenly hills."

ON A SOLDIER FALLEN IN THE PHILIPPINES

Streets of the roaring town,
Hush for him; hush, be still!
He comes, who was stricken down
Doing the word of our will.

Hush! Let him have his state.
Give him his soldier's crown,
The grists of trade can wait
Their grinding at the mill.
But he cannot wait for his honor, now the trumpet has been blown.
Wreathe pride now for his granite brow, lay love on his breast of stone.

Toll! Let the great bells toll
Till the clashing air is dim,
Did we wrong this parted soul?
We will make it up to him.
Toll! Let him never guess
What work we sent him to.
Laurel, laurel, yes.
He did what we bade him do.
Praise, and never a whispered hint but the fight he fought was good;
Never a word that the blood on his sword was his country's own heart's-blood.

A flag for a soldier's bier
Who dies that his land may live;
O banners, banners here,
That he doubt not nor misgive!
That he heed not from the tomb
The evil days draw near
When the nation robed in gloom
With its faithless past shall strive.

William Vaughn Moody

Let him never dream that his bullet's scream went wide
of its island mark,
Home to the heart of his darling land where she stumbled
and sinned in the dark.

George Sterling

George Sterling was born at Sag Harbor, New York, December 1, 1869, and educated at various private schools in the Eastern States. He moved to the far West about 1895 and has lived in California ever since.

Of Sterling's ten volumes of poetry, *The Testimony of the Suns* (1903), *A Wine of Wizardry* (1908) and *The House of Orchids and Other Poems* (1911) are the most characteristic. As their titles indicate, this is poetry of a flamboyant and rhetorical type; of luxuriant sentences and emotions decorated in "the grand manner." Yet Sterling has added a definite vigor to his ornate tropes and verbal prodigality. Nor is he always extravagant. His simpler verses, though not in his most familiar vein, are among his best.

THE BLACK VULTURE

Aloof upon the day's immeasured dome,
He holds unshared the silence of the sky.
Far down his bleak, relentless eyes descry
The eagle's empire and the falcon's home—
Far down, the galleons of sunset roam;
His hazards on the sea of morning lie;
Serene, he hears the broken tempest sigh
Where cold sierras gleam like scattered foam.

And least of all he holds the human swarm—
  Unwitting now that envious men prepare
    To make their dream and its fulfillment one,
When, poised above the caldrons of the storm,
  Their hearts, contemptuous of death, shall dare
    His roads between the thunder and the sun.

THE MASTER MARINER

My grandsire sailed three years from home,
  And slew unmoved the sounding whale:
Here on a windless beach I roam
  And watch far out the hardy sail.

The lions of the surf that cry
  Upon this lion-colored shore
On reefs of midnight met his eye:
  He knew their fangs as I their roar.

My grandside sailed uncharted seas,
  And toll of all their leagues he took:
I scan the shallow bays at ease,
  And tell their colors in a book.

The anchor-chains his music made
  And wind in shrouds and running-gear:
The thrush at dawn beguiles my glade,
  And once, 'tis said, I woke to hear.

George Sterling

My grandsire in his ample fist
  The long harpoon upheld to men:
Behold obedient to my wrist
  A grey gull's-feather for my pen!

Upon my grandsire's leathern cheek
  Five zones their bitter bronze had set:
Some day their hazards I will seek,
  I promise me at times. Not yet.

I think my grandsire now would turn
  A mild but speculative eye
On me, my pen and its concern,
  Then gaze again to sea—and sigh.

Edwin Arlington Robinson

Edwin Arlington Robinson was born December 22, 1869, in the village of Head Tide, Maine. When he was still a child, the Robinson family moved to the nearby town of Gardiner, which figures prominently in Robinson's poetry as "Tilbury Town." In 1891 he entered Harvard College. A little collection of verse was privately printed in 1896 and the following year marked the appearance of his first representative work, *The Children of the Night* (1897).

Somewhat later, he was struggling in various capacities to make a living in New York, five years passing before the publication of *Captain Craig* (1902). This fine piece of psychology, in the cryptic vein of Browning but in Robinson's own idiom, was brought to the attention of Theodore Roosevelt (then President of the United States), who became interested in

the work of the poet and, a few years later, offered him a place in the New York Custom House. Robinson held this position from 1905 to 1910, leaving it the same year which marked the appearance of his most characteristic volume, *The Town down the River*. Robinson's three books, up to this time, showed his clean, firmly-drawn quality; but, in spite of their excellences, they seem little more than a succession of preludes for the dynamic volume that was to establish him in the first rank of American poets. *The Man Against the Sky*, Robinson's fullest and most penetrating work, appeared in 1916. (See Preface.)

In all of these books there is manifest that searching for truth, the constant questioning, that takes the place of mere acceptance. As the work of a verbal portrait painter nothing, with the exception of some of Frost's pictures, has been produced that is at once so keen and so kindly; in the half-cynical, half-mystical etchings like "Cliff Klingenhagen," "Miniver Cheevy," "Richard Cory"—lines where Robinson's irony is inextricably mixed with tenderness—his art is at its height.

Technically, Robinson is as precise as he is dexterous; there is never a false image or a blurred line in any of his verses which, while adhering to the strictest models and executed according to traditional forms, are made fresh and surprising. It is interesting to observe how the smoothness of his rhymes, playing against the hard outlines of his verse, emphasizes the terse, epigrammatic vigor of poems like "The Gift of God," "The Field of Glory" and "The Master," one of the finest evocations of Lincoln which is, at the same time, a bitter commentary on the commercialism of the times and the "shopman's test of age and worth."

Robinson's blank verse is scarcely less individual. It is, in spite of a certain unblinking seriousness, always modern, always packed with the instant. In "Ben Johnson Entertains a Man from Stratford" we have the clearest and most human portrait of Shakespeare ever attempted; the lines run as fluently as good conversation, as inevitable as a perfect melody. In his two reanimations of the Arthurian legends, *Merlin* (1917) and *Launcelot* (1920), Robinson, shaming the tea-table idyls of

Edwin Arlington Robinson

Tennyson, has colored the tale with somber reflections of the collapse of old orders, the darkness of an age in ashes.

Although he is often accused of holding a negative attitude toward life, Robinson's philosophy is essentially positive; a hopeful if never dogmatic desire for a deeper faith, a greater light. It is a philosophy expressed in *Captain Craig:*

> . . . Take on yourself
> But your sincerity, and you take on
> Good promise for all climbing; fly for truth
> And hell shall have no storm to crush your flight;
> No laughter to vex down your loyalty.

A collection of the poet's later verse, *The Three Taverns* (1920), reflects the same high standards of conciseness and craftsmanship. Robinson lives in Peterboro, New Hampshire, during the summer; his home in the winter is in Brooklyn, New York.

MINIVER CHEEVY [1]

Miniver Cheevy, child of scorn,
  Grew lean while he assailed the seasons;
He wept that he was ever born,
  And he had reasons.

Miniver loved the days of old
  When swords were bright and steeds were prancing;
The vision of a warrior bold
  Would set him dancing.

Miniver sighed for what was not,
  And dreamed, and rested from his labors;
He dreamed of Thebes and Camelot,
  And Priam's neighbors.

[1] Reprinted by permission of the publishers, Charles Scribner's Sons, from *The Town down the River* by E. A. Robinson.

Miniver mourned the ripe renown
That made so many a name so fragrant;
He mourned Romance, now on the town,
And Art, a vagrant.

Miniver loved the Medici,
Albeit he had never seen one;
He would have sinned incessantly
Could he have been one.

Miniver cursed the commonplace
And eyed a khaki suit with loathing;
He missed the mediæval grace
Of iron clothing.

Miniver scorned the gold he sought,
But sore annoyed was he without it;
Miniver thought, and thought, and thought,
And thought about it.

Miniver Cheevy, born too late,
Scratched his head and kept on thinking;
Miniver coughed, and called it fate,
And kept on drinking.

THE GIFT OF GOD[1]

Blessed with a joy that only she
Of all alive shall ever know,
She wears a proud humility
For what it was that willed it so,—

[1] Reprinted by permission of the publishers, The Macmillan Company, from *The Man Against the Sky* by E. A. Robinson.

That her degree should be so great
Among the favored of the Lord
That she may scarcely bear the weight
Of her bewildering reward.

As one apart, immune, alone,
Or featured for the shining ones,
And like to none that she has known
Of other women's other sons,—
The firm fruition of her need,
He shines anointed; and he blurs
Her vision, till it seems indeed
A sacrilege to call him hers.

She fears a little for so much
Of what is best, and hardly dares
To think of him as one to touch
With aches, indignities, and cares;
She sees him rather at the goal,
Still shining; and her dream foretells
The proper shining of a soul
Where nothing ordinary dwells.

Perchance a canvass of the town
Would find him far from flags and shouts,
And leave him only the renown
Of many smiles and many doubts;
Perchance the crude and common tongue
Would havoc strangely with his worth;
But she, with innocence unwrung,
Would read his name around the earth.

And others, knowing how this youth
Would shine, if love could make him great,
When caught and tortured for the truth
Would only writhe and hesitate;
While she, arranging for his days
What centuries could not fulfil,
Transmutes him with her faith and praise,
And has him shining where she will.

She crowns him with her gratefulness,
And says again that life is good;
And should the gift of God be less
In him than in her motherhood,
His fame, though vague, will not be small,
As upward through her dream he fares,
Half clouded with a crimson fall
Of roses thrown on marble stairs.

THE MASTER * [1]

(Lincoln as seen, presumably, by one of his contemporaries shortly after the Civil War)

A flying word from here and there
Had sown the name at which we sneered,
But soon the name was everywhere,
To be reviled and then revered:

* See pages 51, 123, 232, 245, 252, 323.

[1] Reprinted by permission of the publishers, Charles Scribner's Sons, from *The Town down the River* by E. A. Robinson.

A presence to be loved and feared,
We cannot hide it, or deny
That we, the gentlemen who jeered,
May be forgotten by and by.

He came when days were perilous
And hearts of men were sore beguiled;
And having made his note of us,
He pondered and was reconciled.
Was ever master yet so mild
As he, and so untamable?
We doubted, even when he smiled,
Not knowing what he knew so well.

He knew that undeceiving fate
Would shame us whom he served unsought;
He knew that he must wince and wait—
The jest of those for whom he fought;
He knew devoutly what he thought
Of us and of our ridicule;
He knew that we must all be taught
Like little children in a school.

We gave a glamour to the task
That he encountered and saw through,
But little of us did he ask,
And little did we ever do.
And what appears if we review
The season when we railed and chaffed?
It is the face of one who knew
That we were learning while we laughed.

Edwin Arlington Robinson

The face that in our vision feels
Again the venom that we flung,
Transfigured to the world reveals
The vigilance to which we clung.
Shrewd, hallowed, harassed, and among
The mysteries that are untold,
The face we see was never young,
Nor could it ever have been old.

For he, to whom we have applied
Our shopman's test of age and worth,
Was elemental when he died,
As he was ancient at his birth:
The saddest among kings of earth,
Bowed with a galling crown, this man
Met rancor with a cryptic mirth,
Laconic—and Olympian.

The love, the grandeur, and the fame
Are bounded by the world alone;
The calm, the smouldering, and the flame
Of awful patience were his own:
With him they are forever flown
Past all our fond self-shadowings,
Wherewith we cumber the Unknown
As with inept Icarian wings.

For we were not as other men:
'Twas ours to soar and his to see.
But we are coming down again,
And we shall come down pleasantly;

Nor shall we longer disagree
On what it is to be sublime,
But flourish in our perigee
And have one Titan at a time.

AN OLD STORY[1]

Strange that I did not know him then,
That friend of mine!
I did not even show him then
One friendly sign;

But cursed him for the ways he had
To make me see
My envy of the praise he had
For praising me.

I would have rid the earth of him
Once, in my pride! . . .
I never knew the worth of him
Until he died.

RICHARD CORY[1]

Whenever Richard Cory went down town,
We people on the pavement looked at him:
He was a gentleman from sole to crown,
Clean favored, and imperially slim.

[1] Reprinted by permission of the publishers, Charles Scribner's Sons, from *The Children of the Night.*

And he was always quietly arrayed,
And he was always human when he talked;
But still he fluttered pulses when he said,
"Good-morning," and he glittered when he walked.

And he was rich—yes, richer than a king,
And admirably schooled in every grace:
In fine, we thought that he was everything
To make us wish that we were in his place.

So on we worked, and waited for the light,
And went without the meat, and cursed the bread;
And Richard Cory, one calm summer night,
Went home and put a bullet through his head.

VAIN GRATUITIES

Never was there a man much uglier
In the eyes of other women, or more grim:
"The Lord has filled her chalice to the brim,
So let us pray she's a philosopher,"
They said; and there was more they said of her—
Deeming it, after twenty years with him,
No wonder that she kept her figure slim
And always made you think of lavender.

But she, demure as ever, and as fair,
Almost, as they remembered her before
She found him, would have laughed had she been there;

And all they said would have been heard no more
Than foam that washes on an island shore
Where there are none to listen or to care.

THE DARK HILLS

Dark hills at evening in the west,
Where sunset hovers like a sound
Of golden horns that sang to rest
Old bones of warriors under ground,
Far now from all the bannered ways
Where flash the legions of the sun,
You fade—as if the last of days
Were fading, and all wars were done.

Edgar Lee Masters

Edgar Lee Masters was born at Garnett, Kansas, August 23, 1869, of old Puritan and pioneering stock. When he was still a boy, the family moved to Illinois, where, after desultory schooling, he studied law in his father's office at Lewiston. For a year he practised with his father and then went to Chicago, where he became a successful and prominent attorney.

Before going to Chicago, Masters had composed a great quantity of verse in traditional forms on still more traditional themes; by the time he was twenty-four he had written about four hundred poems, revealing the result of wide reading and betraying the influence of Poe, Keats, Shelley and Swinburne. His work, previous to the publication of *Spoon River Anthology*, was derivative and undistinguished. In 1895 he wrote a blank verse play on Benedict Arnold. In 1898 he published *A Book of Verses*, a selection of some sixty of the early four hundred.

In 1902 *Maximilian,* another blank verse play, appeared, causing no more comment than the others. Nothing daunted, Masters published several volumes in rapid succession (three books of poetry appearing, under various pseudonyms, between 1905 and 1912), *The New Star Chamber and Other Essays* (1904), *Blood of the Prophets* (1905), *Althea,* a play (1907), *The Trifler,* another play (1908).

In 1914, Masters, at the suggestion of his friend William Marion Reedy, turned from his preoccupation with classic subjects and began to draw upon the life he knew for those concise records which have made him famous. Taking as his model *The Greek Anthology,* which Reedy had pressed upon him, Masters evolved *Spoon River Anthology,* that astonishing assemblage of over two hundred self-inscribed epitaphs, in which the dead of a middle Western town are supposed to have written the truth about themselves. Through these frank revelations, many of them interrelated, the village is recreated for us; it lives again, unvarnished and typical, with all its intrigues, hypocrisies, feuds, martyrdoms and occasional exaltations. The crippling monotony of existence in a drab township, the defeat of ideals, the struggle toward higher goals —all is synthesized in these crowded pages. All moods and all manner of voices are heard here—even Masters's, who explains the reason for his medium and the selection of his form through "Petit, the Poet."

The success of the volume was stupendous. (See Preface.) With every new attack (and its frankness continued to make fresh enemies) its readers increased; it was imitated, parodied, reviled as "a piece of yellow journalism;" hailed as "an American Comédie Humaine." Finally, after the storm of controversy, it has taken its place as a landmark in American literature.

With *Spoon River Anthology* Masters arrived—and left. He went back to his first rhetorical style, resurrecting many of his earlier trifles, reprinting dull echoes of Tennyson, imitations of Shelley, archaic paraphrases in the manner of Swinburne.

Yet, though none of Masters's subsequent volumes can be compared to his masterpiece, all of them contain examples of the same straightforwardness, the stubborn searching for truth that intensified his best-known characterizations.

Songs and Satires (1916) contains the startling "All Life in a Life" and the gravely moving "Silence." *The Great Valley* (1916) is packed with echoes and a growing dependence on Browning. In *Toward the Gulf* (1918), the Browning influence predominates, although there are such splendid individual monologues as "The World Saver," "St. Deseret" and "Front the Ages with a Smile." *Starved Rock* (1919) and *Domesday Book* (1920) are, like all Masters's later books, queerly assembled mixtures of good, bad and derivative verse. And yet, for all of this poet's borrowings, in spite of his cynicism and disillusion, Masters's work is a continual searching for some key to the mystery of truth, the mastery of life.

PETIT, THE POET[1]

Seeds in a dry pod, tick, tick, tick,
Tick, tick, tick, like mites in a quarrel—
Faint iambics that the full breeze wakens—
But the pine tree makes a symphony thereof.
Triolets, villanelles, rondels, rondeaus,
Ballades by the score with the same old thought:
The snows and the roses of yesterday are vanished;
And what is love but a rose that fades?
Life all around me here in the village:
Tragedy, comedy, valor and truth,
Courage, constancy, heroism, failure—
All in the loom, and oh what patterns!

[1] Reprinted by permission of the publishers, The Macmillan Company, from *Spoon River Anthology* by Edgar Lee Masters.

Edgar Lee Masters

Woodlands, meadows, streams and rivers—
Blind to all of it all my life long.
Triolets, villanelles, rondels, rondeaus,
Seeds in a dry pod, tick, tick, tick,
Tick, tick, tick, what little iambics,
While Homer and Whitman roared in the pines!

LUCINDA MATLOCK[1]

I went to the dances at Chandlerville,
And played snap-out at Winchester.
One time we changed partners,
Driving home in the moonlight of middle June,
And then I found Davis.
We were married and lived together for seventy years,
Enjoying, working, raising the twelve children,
Eight of whom we lost
Ere I had reached the age of sixty.
I spun, I wove, I kept the house, I nursed the sick,
I made the garden, and for holiday
Rambled over the fields where sang the larks,
And by Spoon River gathering many a shell,
And many a flower and medicinal weed—
Shouting to the wooded hills, singing to the green valleys.
At ninety-six I had lived enough, that is all,
And passed to a sweet repose.
What is this I hear of sorrow and weariness,

[1] Reprinted by permission of the publishers, The Macmillan Company, from *Spoon River Anthology* by Edgar Lee Masters.

Anger, discontent and drooping hopes?
Degenerate sons and daughters,
Life is too strong for you—
It takes life to love Life.

ANNE RUTLEDGE * [1]

Out of me unworthy and unknown
The vibrations of deathless music;
"With malice toward none, with charity for all."
Out of me the forgiveness of millions toward millions,
And the beneficent face of a nation
Shining with justice and truth.
I am Anne Rutledge who sleep beneath these weeds,
Beloved in life of Abraham Lincoln,
Wedded to him, not through union,
But through separation.
Bloom forever, O Republic,
From the dust of my bosom!

SILENCE [2]

I have known the silence of the stars and of the sea,
And the silence of the city when it pauses,
And the silence of a man and a maid,
And the silence for which music alone finds the word,

* See pages 51, 114, 232, 245, 252, 323.

[1] Reprinted by permission of the publishers, The Macmillan Company, from *Spoon River Anthology* by Edgar Lee Masters.

[2] Reprinted by permission of the publishers, The Macmillan Company, from *Songs and Satires* by Edgar Lee Masters.

And the silence of the woods before the winds of
spring begin,
And the silence of the sick
When their eyes roam about the room.
And I ask: For the depths
Of what use is language?
A beast of the field moans a few times
When death takes its young.
And we are voiceless in the presence of realities—
We cannot speak.

A curious boy asks an old soldier
Sitting in front of the grocery store,
"How did you lose your leg?"
And the old soldier is struck with silence,
Or his mind flies away
Because he cannot concentrate it on Gettysburg.
It comes back jocosely
And he says, "A bear bit it off."
And the boy wonders, while the old soldier
Dumbly, feebly lives over
The flashes of guns, the thunder of cannon,
The shrieks of the slain,
And himself lying on the ground,
And the hospital surgeons, the knives,
And the long days in bed.
But if he could describe it all
He would be an artist.
But if he were an artist there would be deeper wounds—
Which he could not describe.

There is the silence of a great hatred,
And the silence of a great love,
And the silence of a deep peace of mind,
And the silence of an embittered friendship,
There is the silence of a spiritual crisis,
Through which your soul, exquisitely tortured,
Comes with visions not to be uttered
Into a realm of higher life.
And the silence of the gods who understand each other without speech,
There is the silence of defeat.
There is the silence of those unjustly punished;
And the silence of the dying whose hand
Suddenly grips yours.
There is the silence between father and son,
When the father cannot explain his life,
Even though he be misunderstood for it.

There is the silence that comes between husband and wife.
There is the silence of those who have failed;
And the vast silence that covers
Broken nations and vanquished leaders.
There is the silence of Lincoln,
Thinking of the poverty of his youth.
And the silence of Napoleon
After Waterloo.
And the silence of Jeanne d'Arc
Saying amid the flames, "Blesséd Jesus"—
Revealing in two words all sorrow, all hope.

Edgar Lee Masters

And there is the silence of age,
Too full of wisdom for the tongue to utter it
In words intelligible to those who have not lived
The great range of life.

And there is the silence of the dead.
If we who are in life cannot speak
Of profound experiences,
Why do you marvel that the dead
Do not tell you of death?
Their silence shall be interpreted
As we approach them.

Stephen Crane

Stephen Crane, whose literary career was one of the most meteoric in American letters, was born at Newark, New Jersey, November 1, 1871. After taking a partial course at Lafayette College, he entered journalism at sixteen and, until the time of his death, was a reporter and writer of newspaper sketches. When he died, at the age of thirty, he had ten printed volumes standing to his credit, two more announced for publication, and two others which were appearing serially.

Crane's most famous novel, *The Red Badge of Courage* (1895), was written when he was twenty-two years old. What is even more astonishing is the fact that this detailed description of blood and battlefields was written by a civilian far from the scene of conflict. This novel (Crane's second) was an instantaneous and international success. *The Atlantic Monthly* pronounced it "great enough to set a new fashion in literature"; H. G. Wells, speaking of its influence in England, said Crane was "the first expression of the opening mind or a new period . . . a record of an intensity beyond all precedent."

Crane's other books, although less powerful than *The Red Badge of Courage,* are scarcely less vivid. *The Open Boat* (1898) and *The Monster* (1899) are full of an intuitive wisdom and a sensitivity that caused Wells to exclaim "The man who can call these 'brilliant fragments' would reproach Rodin for not 'completing' his fragments."

At various periods in Crane's brief career, he experimented in verse, seeking to find new effects in unrhymed lines, a new acuteness of vision. The results were embodied in two volumes of unusual poetry, *The Black Riders* (1895) and *War Is Kind* (1899), lines that strangely anticipated the Imagists and the epigrammatic free verse that followed fifteen years later.

Besides his many novels, short stories and poems, Crane was writing, at the time of his death, descriptions of the world's great battles for *Lippincott's Magazine;* his droll *Whilomville Stories* for boys were appearing in *Harper's Monthly* and he was beginning a series of similar stories for girls. It is more than probable that this feverish energy of production aggravated the illness that caused Crane's death. He reached his refuge in the Black Forest only to die at the journey's end, June 5, 1900.

I SAW A MAN

I saw a man pursuing the horizon;
Round and round they sped.
I was disturbed at this;
I accosted the man.
"It is futile," I said,
"You can never"—

"You lie," he cried,
And ran on.

Stephen Crane

THE WAYFARER

The wayfarer,
Perceiving the pathway to truth,
Was struck with astonishment.
It was thickly grown with weeds.
"Ha," he said,
"I see that no one has passed here
"In a long time."
Later he saw that each weed
Was a singular knife.
"Well," he mumbled at last,
"Doubtless there are other roads."

HYMN

A slant of sun on dull brown walls,
A forgotten sky of bashful blue.

Toward God a mighty hymn,
A song of collisions and cries,
Rumbling wheels, hoof-beats, bells,
Welcomes, farewells, love-calls, final moans,
Voices of joy, idiocy, warning, despair,
The unknown appeals of brutes,
The chanting of flowers,
The screams of cut trees,
The senseless babble of bees and wise men—
A clamoring inadvertency that says to the stars:
"O God, save us!"

Stephen Crane

THE BLADES OF GRASS

In Heaven,
Some little blades of grass
Stood before God.
"What did you do?"
Then all save one of the little blades
Began eagerly to relate
The merits of their lives.
This one stayed a small way behind,
Ashamed.
Presently, God said,
"And what did you do?"
The little blade answered, "Oh, my Lord,
"Memory is bitter to me,
For, if I did good deeds,
I know not of them."
Then God, in all his splendor,
Arose from his throne.
"Oh, best little blade of grass!" he said.

Edwin Ford Piper

Edwin Ford Piper was born at Auburn, Nebraska, February 8, 1871, and literally grew up in the saddle. In 1893 he entered the University of Nebraska, from which he received an A.B. in 1897 and A.M. in 1900. He studied at Harvard (1903-4), was one of the editors of *The Kiote* (a magazine published from 1898 to 1902 in Lincoln, Nebraska), and, since 1905, has been an instructor of English at the State University of Iowa.

Edwin Ford Piper

Piper's *Barbed Wire and Other Poems* (1918) is saturated with the color of his environment. His later poems are still more vivid and racy. "Sweetgrass Range" (with its self-acknowledged debt to Burns's "Rattlin' Roarin' Willie") and "Bindlestiff" are fresh evidences of this author's creative interest in ballads and folk-lore.

BINDLESTIFF

Oh, the lives of men, lives of men,
In pattern-molds be run;
But there's you, and me, and Bindlestiff—
And remember Mary's Son.

At dawn the hedges and the wheel-ruts ran
Into a brightening sky. The grass bent low
With shimmering dew, and many a late wild rose
Unrolled the petals from its odorous heart
While birds held tuneful gossip. Suddenly,
Each bubbling trill and whistle hid away
As from a hawk; the fragrant silence heard
Only the loving stir of little leaves;
Then a man's baritone broke roughly in:

I've gnawed my crust of mouldy bread,
Skimmed my mulligan stew;
Laid beneath the barren hedge—
Sleety night-winds blew.

Slanting rain chills my bones,
Sun bakes my skin;
Rocky road for my limping feet,
Door where I can't go in.

Above the hedgerow floated filmy smoke
From the hidden singer's fire. Once more the voice:

I used to burn the mules with the whip
When I worked on the grading gang;
But the boss was a crook, and he docked my pay—
Some day that boss will hang.

I used to live in a six by nine,
Try to save my dough—
It's a bellyful of the chaff of life,
Feet that up and go.

The mesh of leafy branches rustled loud,
Into the road slid Bindlestiff. You've seen
The like of the traveller: gaunt humanity
In stained and broken coat, with untrimmed hedge
Of rusty beard and curling sunburnt hair;
His hat, once white, a dull uncertain cone;
His leathery hands and cheeks, his bright blue eyes
That always see new faces and strange dogs;
His mouth that laughs at life and at himself.

Sometimes they shut you up in jail—
Dark, and a filthy cell;
I hope the fellows built them jails
Find 'em down in hell.

But up above, you can sleep outdoors—
Feed you like a king;
You never have to saw no wood,
Only job is sing.

The tones came mellower, as unevenly
The tramp limped off trailing the hobo song:

Good-bye, farewell to Omaha,
K. C., and Denver, too;
Put my foot on the flying freight,
Going to ride her through.

Bindlestiff topped a hillock, against the sky
Showed stick and bundle with his extra shoes
Jauntily dangling. Bird to bird once more
Made low sweet answer; in the wild rose cups
The bee found yellow meal; all softly moved
The white and purple morning-glory bells
As on the gently rustling hedgetop leaves
The sun's face rested. Bindlestiff was gone.

Oh, the lives of men, lives of men,
In pattern-molds be run;
But there's you, and me, and Bindlestiff—
And remember Mary's Son.

SWEETGRASS RANGE

Come sell your pony, cowboy—
Sell your pony to me;
Braided bridle and your puncher saddle,
And spend your money free.

Edwin Ford Piper

"If I should sell my pony,
And ride the range no more,
Nail up my hat and my silver spurs
Above my shanty door;

"And let my door stand open wide
To the snow and the rain and sun;
And bury me under the green sweetgrass
Where you hear the river run."

As I came down the sweetgrass range
And by the cabin door,
I heard a singing in the early dusk
Along the river shore;

I heard a singing to the early stars,
And the tune of a pony's feet.
The joy of the riding singer
I never shall forget.

T. A. Daly

Thomas Augustine Daly was born in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, May 28, 1871. He attended Villanova College and Fordham University (1889), leaving there at the end of his sophomore year to become a newspaper man. Since 1891 he has been on the staff of various Philadelphia journals, writing reviews, editorials, travel-notes and, most of all, running the columns in which his much-quoted verse originally appeared.

Canzoni (1906) and *Carmina* (1909) contain the best-known of Daly's varied dialect verse. Although he has written in

half a dozen different idioms including "straight" English (*vide Songs of Wedlock,* 1916), his half-humorous, half-pathetic interpretations of the Irish and Italian immigrants are his *forte.*

Seldom descending to caricature, Daly exhibits the features and foibles of his characters without exploiting them; even the lightest passages in *McAroni Ballads* (1919) are done with delicacy and a not too sentimental appreciation.

THE SONG OF THE THRUSH

Ah! the May was grand this mornin'!
Shure, how could I feel forlorn in
Such a land, when tree and flower tossed
their kisses to the breeze?
Could an Irish heart be quiet
While the Spring was runnin' riot,
An' the birds of free America were singin' in the trees?
In the songs that they were singin'
No familiar note was ringin',
But I strove to imitate them an' I whistled like a lad.
Oh, my heart was warm to love them
For the very newness of them—
For the ould songs that they helped me to forget—an'
I was glad.

So I mocked the feathered choir
To my hungry heart's desire,
An' I gloried in the comradeship that made
their joy my own.
Till a new note sounded, stillin'
All the rest. A thrush was trillin'!

Ah! the thrush I left behind me in the fields about
Athlone!
Where, upon the whitethorn swayin',
He was minstrel of the Mayin',
In my days of love an' laughter that the years have laid
at rest;
Here again his notes were ringin'!
But I'd lost the heart for singin'—
Ah! the song I could not answer was the one I knew
the best.

MIA CARLOTTA

Giuseppe, da barber, ees greata for "mash,"
He gotta da bigga, da blacka mustache,
Good clo'es an' good styla an' playnta good cash.

W'enevra Giuseppe ees walk on da street,
Da peopla dey talka, "how nobby! how neat!
How softa da handa, how smalla da feet."

He raisa hees hat an' he shaka hees curls,
An' smila weeth teetha so shiny like pearls;
O! many da heart of da seelly young girls
He gotta.
Yes, playnta he gotta—
But notta
Carlotta!

Giuseppe, da barber, he maka da eye,
An' lika de steam engine puffa an' sigh,
For catcha Carlotta w'en she ees go by.

Carlotta she walka weeth nose in da air,
An' look through Giuseppe weeth far-away stare,
As eef she no see dere ees som'body dere.

Giuseppe, da barber, he gotta da cash,
He gotta da clo'es an' da bigga mustache,
He gotta da seelly young girls for da "mash,"
But notta—
You bat my life, notta—
Carlotta.
I gotta!

BETWEEN TWO LOVES

I gotta lov' for Angela,
I lov' Carlotta, too.
I no can marry both o' dem,
So w'at I gona do?

O! Angela ees pretta girl,
She gotta hair so black, so curl,
An' teeth so white as anytheeng.
An' O! she gotta voice to seeng,
Dat mak' your hearta feel eet must
Jump up an' dance or eet weell bust.

T. A. Daly

An' alla time she seeng, her eyes
Dey smila like Italia's skies,
An' makin' flirtin' looks at you—
But dat ees all w'at she can do.

Carlotta ees no gotta song,
But she ees twice so big an' strong
As Angela, an' she no look
So beautiful—but she can cook.
You oughta see her carry wood!
I tal you w'at, eet do you good.
When she ees be som'body's wife
She worka hard, you bat my life!
She never gattin' tired, too—
But dat ees all w'at she can do.

O! my! I weesh dat Angela
    Was strong for carry wood,
Or else Carlotta gotta song
    An' looka pretta good.
I gotta lov' for Angela,
    I lov' Carlotta, too.
I no can marry both o' dem,
    So w'at I gona do?

Paul Laurence Dunbar

Paul Laurence Dunbar was born in 1872 at Dayton, Ohio, he son of negro slaves. He was, before and after he began o write his intrepretative verse, an elevator-boy. He tried ıewspaper work unsuccessfully and, in 1899, Dunbar was given

a minor position in the Library of Congress at Washington, D. C.

Although Dunbar wrote several volumes of short stories and two novels, he is most at home in his verse. And even here, his best work is not those straight, "literary English" pieces by which he set such store, but the racy rhymes written in negro dialect, alternately tender and mocking. Dunbar's first collection, *Lyrics of Lowly Life* (1896), contains many of his most characteristic poems. In an introduction, in which mention was made of the octoroon Dumas and the great Russian poet Pushkin, who was a mulatto, William Dean Howells wrote, "So far as I could remember, Paul Dunbar was the only man of pure African blood and of American civilization to feel the negro life æsthetically and express it lyrically. . . . His brilliant and unique achievement was to have studied the American negro objectively, and to have represented him as he found him—with humor, with sympathy, and yet with what the reader must instinctively feel to be entire truthfulness."

Lyrics of the Hearthside (1899) and *Lyrics of Love and Laughter* (1903) are two other volumes full of folk-stuff. And though the final *Lyrics of Sunshine and Shadow* (1905) is less original, being crowded with echoes of all kinds of poetry from the songs of Robert Burns to the childhood rhymes of J. W. Riley, it contains a few of Dunbar's least-known but keenest interpretations.

Dunbar died in the city of his birth, Dayton, Ohio, February 10, 1906.

THE TURNING OF THE BABIES IN THE BED [1]

Woman's sho' a cur'ous critter, an' dey ain't no doubtin' dat.
She's a mess o' funny capahs f'om huh slippahs to huh hat.

[1] From *Lyrics of Love and Laughter.* Copyright, 1903, by Dodd, Mead & Company.

Ef yo' tries to un'erstan' huh, an' yo' fails, des' up an' say:
" D' ain't a bit o' use to try to un'erstan' a woman's way."

I don' mean to be complainin', but I's jes' a-settin' down
Some o' my own obserwations, w'en I cas' my eye eroun'.
Ef yo' ax me fu' to prove it, I ken do it mighty fine,
Fu' dey ain't no bettah 'zample den dis ve'y wife o' mine.

In de ve'y hea't o' midnight, w'en I's sleepin' good an' soun',
I kin hyeah a so't o' rustlin' an' somebody movin' 'roun'.
An' I say, " Lize, whut yo' doin'? " But she frown an' shek huh haid,
" Hesh yo' mouf, I's only tu'nin' of de chillun in de bed.

" Don' yo' know a chile gits restless, layin' all de night one way?
An' yo' got to kind o' 'range him sev'al times befo' de day?
So de little necks won't worry, an' de little backs won't break;
Don' yo' t'ink 'cause chillun's chillun dey haint got no pain an' ache."

So she shakes 'em, an' she twists 'em, an' she tu'ns 'em 'roun' erbout,
'Twell I don' see how de chillun evah keeps f'om hollahin' out.

Den she lif's 'em up head down'ards, so's dey won't git livah-grown,
But dey snoozes des' ez peaceful ez a liza'd on a stone.

W'en hit's mos' nigh time fu' wakin' on de dawn o' jedgement day,
Seems lak I kin hyeah ol' Gab'iel lay his trumpet down an' say,
"Who dat walkin' 'roun' so easy, down on earf ermong de dead?"—
'T will be Lizy up a-tu'nin' of de chillun in de bed.

A COQUETTE CONQUERED [1]

Yes, my ha't's ez ha'd ez stone—
Go 'way, Sam, an' lemme 'lone.
No; I ain't gwine change my min';
Ain't gwine ma'y you—nuffin' de kin'.

Phiny loves you true an' deah?
Go ma'y Phiny; whut I keer?
Oh, you needn't mou'n an' cry—
I don't keer how soon you die.

Got a present! Whut you got?
Somef'n fu' de pan er pot!
Huh! Yo' sass do sholy beat—
Think I don't git 'nough to eat?

[1] From *Lyrics of Lowly Life.* Copyright, 1896, by Dodd, Mead & Company.

Whut's dat un'neaf yo' coat?
Looks des lak a little shoat.
'Tain't no possum? Bless de Lamb!
Yes, it is, you rascal, Sam!

Gin it to me; whut you say?
Ain't you sma't now! Oh, go 'way!
Possum do look mighty nice;
But you ax too big a price.

Tell me, is you talkin' true,
Dat's de gal's whut ma'ies you?
Come back, Sam; now whah's you gwine?
Co'se you knows dat possum's mine!

DISCOVERED [1]

Seen you down at chu'ch las' night,
Nevah min', Miss Lucy.
What I mean? Oh, dat's all right,
Nevah min', Miss Lucy.
You was sma't ez sma't could be,
But you couldn't hide f'om me.
Ain't I got two eyes to see!
Nevah min', Miss Lucy.

Guess you thought you's awful keen;
Nevah min', Miss Lucy.
Evahthing you done, I seen;
Nevah min', Miss Lucy.

[1] From *Lyrics of Lowly Life*. Copyright, 1896, by Dodd, Mead & Company.

Paul Laurence Dunbar

Seen him tek yo' ahm jes' so,
When he got outside de do'—
Oh, I know dat man's yo' beau!
Nevah min', Miss Lucy.

Say now, honey, wha'd he say?—
Nevah min', Miss Lucy.
Keep yo' secrets—dat's yo' way—
Nevah min', Miss Lucy.
Won't tell me an' I'm yo' pal!
I'm gwine tell his othah gal,—
Know huh, too, huh name is Sal.
Nevah min', Miss Lucy.

Guy Wetmore Carryl

Guy Wetmore Carryl, son of Charles Edward Carryl (see page 34), was born in New York City, March 4, 1873. He graduated from Columbia University in 1895, was editor of *Munsey's Magazine,* 1895-6, and, during the time he lived abroad (from 1897 to 1902), was the foreign representative of various American publications.

As a writer of prose he was received with no little acclaim; his stories *The Transgression of Andrew Vane* (1902) and *Zut and Other Parisians* (1903) held the attention of a restless reading public. But it was as a writer of light verse that Carryl was preëminent. Inheriting a remarkable technical gift from his father, young Carryl soon surpassed him as well as all other rivals in the field of brilliantly rhymed, brilliantly turned burlesques. Although he wrote several serious poems (the best of which have been collected in the posthumously published *The Garden of Years,* 1904), Carryl's most characteristic work is to be found in his perversions of the parables of Æsop,

Guy Wetmore Carryl

Fables for the Frivolous (1898), the topsy-turvy interpretations of old nursery rhymes, ***Mother Goose for Grownups*** (1900) and the fantastic variations on the fairy tales in ***Grimm Tales Made Gay*** (1903)—all of them with a surprising (and punning) Moral attached.

This extraordinary versifier died, before reaching the height of his power, at the age of thirty-one, in the summer of 1904.

HOW JACK FOUND THAT BEANS MAY GO BACK ON A CHAP

Without the slightest basis
For hypochondriasis
  A widow had forebodings which a cloud around her flung,
And with expression cynical
For half the day a clinical
  Thermometer she held beneath her tongue.

Whene'er she read the papers
She suffered from the vapors,
  At every tale of malady or accident she'd groan;
In every new and smart disease,
From housemaid's knee to heart disease,
  She recognized the symptoms as her own!

She had a yearning chronic
To try each novel tonic,
  Elixir, panacea, lotion, opiate, and balm;
And from a homeopathist
Would change to an hydropathist,
  And back again, with stupefying calm!

Guy Wetmore Carryl

She was nervous, cataleptic,
And anemic, and dyspeptic:
  Though not convinced of apoplexy, yet she had her fears.
She dwelt with force fanatical
Upon a twinge rheumatical,
  And said she had a buzzing in her ears!

Now all of this bemoaning
And this grumbling and this groaning
  The mind of Jack, her son and heir, unconscionably bored.
His heart completely hardening,
He gave his time to gardening,
  For raising beans was something he adored.

Each hour in accents morbid
This limp maternal bore bid
  Her callous son affectionate and lachrymose good-bys.
She never granted Jack a day
Without some long "Alackaday!"
  Accompanied by rolling of the eyes.

But Jack, no panic showing,
Just watched his beanstalk growing,
  And twined with tender fingers the tendrils up the pole.
At all her words funereal
He smiled a smile ethereal,
  Or sighed an absent-minded "Bless my soul!"

That hollow-hearted creature
Would never change a feature:
  No tear bedimmed his eye, however touching was her talk.

Guy Wetmore Carryl

She never fussed or flurried him,
The only thing that worried him
  Was when no bean-pods grew upon the stalk!

But then he wabbled loosely
His head, and wept profusely,
  And, taking out his handkerchief to mop away his tears,
Exclaimed: "It hasn't got any!"
He found this blow to botany
  Was sadder than were all his mother's fears.

The Moral is that gardeners pine
Whene'er no pods adorn the vine.
Of all sad words experience gleans
The saddest are: "It *might* have beans."
  (I did not make this up myself:
  'Twas in a book upon my shelf.
  It's witty, but I don't deny
  It's rather Whittier than I!)

THE SYCOPHANTIC FOX AND THE GULLIBLE RAVEN

A raven sat upon a tree,
    And not a word he spoke, for
His beak contained a piece of Brie,
    Or, maybe, it was Roquefort.
      We'll make it any kind you please—
      At all events it was a cheese.

Guy Wetmore Carryl

Beneath the tree's umbrageous limb
A hungry fox sat smiling;
He saw the raven watching him,
And spoke in words beguiling:
"J'admire," said he, *"ton beau plumage,"*
(The which was simply persiflage.)

Two things there are, no doubt you know,
To which a fox is used:
A rooster that is bound to crow,
A crow that's bound to roost;
And whichsoever he espies
He tells the most unblushing lies.

"Sweet fowl," he said, "I understand
You're more than merely natty,
I hear you sing to beat the band
And Adelina Patti.
Pray render with your liquid tongue
A bit from 'Götterdämmerung.'"

This subtle speech was aimed to please
The crow, and it succeeded;
He thought no bird in all the trees
Could sing as well as he did.
In flattery completely doused,
He gave the "Jewel Song" from "Faust."

But gravitation's law, of course,
As Isaac Newton showed it,
Exerted on the cheese its force,
And elsewhere soon bestowed it.
In fact, there is no need to tell
What happened when to earth it fell.

I blush to add that when the bird
Took in the situation
He said one brief, emphatic word,
Unfit for publication.
The fox was greatly startled, but
He only sighed and answered "Tut."

THE MORAL is: A fox is bound
To be a shameless sinner.
And also: When the cheese comes round
You know it's after dinner.
But (what is only known to few)
The fox is after dinner, too.

HOW A CAT WAS ANNOYED AND A POET WAS BOOTED

A poet had a cat.
There is nothing odd in that—
(I *might* make a little pun about the *Mews!*)
But what is really more
Remarkable, she wore
A pair of pointed patent-leather shoes.

Guy Wetmore Carryl

And I doubt me greatly whether
E'er you heard the like of that:
Pointed shoes of patent-leather
On a cat!

His time he used to pass
Writing sonnets, on the grass—
(I *might* say something good on *pen* and *sward!*)
While the cat sat near at hand,
Trying hard to understand
The poems he occasionally roared.
(I myself possess a feline,
But when poetry I roar
He is sure to make a bee-line
For the door.)

The poet, cent by cent,
All his patrimony spent—
(I *might* tell how he went from *verse* to *worse!*)
Till the cat was sure she could,
By advising, do him good.
So addressed him in a manner that was terse:
"We are bound toward the scuppers,
And the time has come to act,
Or we'll both be on our uppers
For a fact!"

On her boot she fixed her eye,
But the boot made no reply—
(I *might* say: "Couldn't speak to save its *sole!*")

And the foolish bard, instead
Of responding, only read
A verse that wasn't bad upon the whole.
And it pleased the cat so greatly,
Though she knew not what it meant,
That I'll quote approximately
How it went:—

"If I should live to be
The last leaf upon the tree"—
(I *might* put in: "I think I'd just as *leaf!*")
"Let them smile, as I do now,
At the old forsaken bough"—
Well, he'd plagiarized it bodily, in brief!
But that cat of simple breeding
Couldn't read the lines between,
So she took it to a leading
Magazine.

She was jarred and very sore
When they showed her to the door.
(I *might* hit off the *door* that was a *jar!*)
To the spot she swift returned
Where the poet sighed and yearned,
And she told him that he'd gone a little far.
"Your performance with this rhyme has
Made me absolutely sick,"
She remarked. "I think the time has
Come to kick!"

Guy Wetmore Carryl

I could fill up half the page
With descriptions of her rage—
(I *might* say that she went a bit *too far!*)
When he smiled and murmured: "Shoo!"
"There is one thing I can do!"
She answered with a wrathful kind of purr.
"You may shoo me, an' it suit you,
But I feel my conscience bid
Me, as tit for tat, to boot you!"
(Which she did.)

The Moral of the plot
(Though I say it, as should not!)
Is: An editor is difficult to suit.
But again there're other times
When the man who fashions rhymes
Is a rascal, and a bully one to boot!

H. H. Knibbs

Harry Herbert Knibbs was born at Niagara Falls, October 24, 1874. After a desultory schooling, he attended Harvard for three years when he was thirty-four. "Somebody said I took honors in English," says Knibbs, "but I never saw them." He wrote his first book, *Lost Farm Camp*, a novel, as a class exercise.

Half a dozen volumes followed, *Overland Red* (1914) and *Tang of Life* (1917) being the most popular. In 1911, Knibbs settled in Lost Angeles, California, where he has lived ever since.

In *Riders of the Stars* (1916) *and Songs of the Trail* (1920), Knibbs carries on the tradition of Bret Harte and the Pike

H. H. Knibbs

County Ballads. High-hearted verse this is, with more than an occasional flash of poetry. To the typical Western breeziness, Knibbs adds a wider whimsicality, a rough-shod but nimble imagination.

THE VALLEY THAT GOD FORGOT

Out in the desert spaces, edged by a hazy blue,
Davison sought the faces of the long-lost friends he knew:
They were there, in the distance dreaming
Their dreams that were worn and old;
They were there, to his frenzied seeming,
Still burrowing down for gold.

Davison's face was leather; his mouth was a swollen blot,
His mind was a floating feather, in The Valley That God Forgot;
Wild as a dog gone loco,
Or sullen or meek, by turns,
He mumbled a "Poco! Poco!"
And whispered of pools and ferns.

Gold! Why his, for the finding! But water was never found,
Save in deep caverns winding miles through the underground:
Cool, far, shadowy places
Edged by the mirrored trees,
When—Davison saw the faces!
And fear let loose his knees.

H. H. Knibbs

There was Shorty who owed him money, and Billing
who bossed the crowd;
And Steve whom the boys called "Sunny," and Collins
who talked so loud:
Miguel with the handsome daughter,
And the rustler, Ed McCray;
Five—and they begged for water,
And offered him gold, in pay.

Gold? It was never cheaper. And Davison shook his
head:
"The price of a drink is steeper out here than in town,"
he said.
He laughed as they mouthed and muttered
Through lips that were cracked and dried;
The pulse in his ear-drum fluttered:
"I'm through with the game!" he cried.

"I'm through!" And he knelt and fumbled the cap of
his dry canteen
Then, rising, he swayed and stumbled into a black ravine:
His ghostly comrades followed,
For Davison's end was near,
And a shallow grave they hollowed,
When up from it, cool and clear

Bubbled the water—hidden a pick-stroke beneath the
sand;
Davison, phantom-ridden, scooped with a shaking
hand . . .

H. H. Knibbs

Davison swears they made it,
The Well where we drank to-day.
Davison's game? He played it
And won—so the town-folk say:

Called it, The Morning-Glory—near those abandoned stamps,
And Davison's crazy story was told in a hundred camps:
Time and the times have tamed it,
His yarn—and this desert spot,
But I'm strong for the man who named it,
The Valley That God Forgot.

ROLL A ROCK DOWN

Oh, out in the West where the riders are ready,
They sing an old song and they tell an old tale,
And its moral is plain: Take it easy, go steady,
While riding a horse on the Malibu Trail.

It's a high, rocky trail with its switch-backs and doubles,
It has no beginning and never an end:
It's risky and rough and it's plumb full of troubles,
From Shifty—that's shale—up to Powder Cut Bend.

Old-timers will tell you the rangers who made it,
Sang "Roll A Rock Down," with a stiff upper lip,
And cussed all creation, but managed to grade it;
With a thousand-foot drop if a pony should slip.

H. H. Knibbs

Oh, the day it was wet and the sky it was cloudy,
  The trail was as slick as an oil-rigger's pants,
When Ranger McCabe on his pony, Old Rowdy,
  Came ridin' where walkin' was takin' a chance.

"Oh, Roll A Rock Down!" picks and shovels was clangin',
  And Rowdy a-steppin' that careful and light,
When the edge it gave way and McCabe was left hangin'
  Clean over the rim—with no bottom in sight.

I shook out a loop—bein' crowded for throwin';
  I flipped a fair noose for a rope that was wet:
It caught just as Mac lost his holt and was goin',
  And burned through my fingers: it's burnin' them yet.

For Ranger McCabe never knuckled to danger;
  My pardner in camp, on the trail, or in town:
And he slid into glory, a true forest-ranger,
  With: "Hell! I'm a-goin'! Just roll a rock down."

So, roll a rock down where a ranger is sleepin'
  Aside of his horse below Powder Cut Bend:
I ride and I look where the shadows are creepin',
  And roll a rock down—for McCabe was my friend.

I've sung you my song and I've told you my story,
  And all that I ask when I'm done with the show,
Is, roll a rock down when I slide into glory,
  And say that I went like a ranger should go.

H. H. Knibbs

THE TRAIL-MAKERS

North and west along the coast among the misty islands,
  Sullen in the grip of night and smiling in the day:
Nunivak and Akutan, with Nome against the highlands,
  On we drove with plated prow agleam with frozen spray.

Loud we sang adventuring and lustily we jested;
  Quarreled, fought, and then forgot the taunt, the blow, the jeers;
Named a friend and clasped a hand—a compact sealed, attested;
  Shared tobacco, yarns, and drink, and planned surpassing years.

Then—the snow that locked the trail where famine's shadow followed
  Out across the blinding white and through the stabbing cold,
Past tents along the tundra over faces blotched and hollowed;
  Toothless mouths that babbled foolish songs of hidden gold.

Wisdom, lacking sinews for the toil, gave over trying;
  Fools, with thews of iron, blundered on and won the fight;
Weaklings drifted homeward; else they tarried—worse than dying—
  With the painted lips and wastrels on the edges of the night.

H. H. Knibbs

Berries of the saskatoon were ripening and falling;
Flowers decked the barren with its timber scant and low;
All along the river-trail were many voices calling,
And e'en the whimpering Malemutes they heard—and whined to go.

Eyelids seared with fire and ice and frosted parka-edges;
Firelight like a spray of blood on faces lean and brown;
Shifting shadows of the pines across our loaded sledges,
And far behind the fading trail, the lights and lures of town.

So we played the bitter game nor asked for praise or pity:
Wind and wolf they found the bones that blazed out lonely trails. . . .
Where a dozen shacks were set, to-day there blooms a city;
Now where once was empty blue, there pass a thousand sails.

Scarce a peak that does not mark the grave of those who perished
Nameless, lost to lips of men who followed, gleaning fame
From the soundless triumph of adventurers who cherished
Naught above the glory of a chance to play the game.

H. H. Knibbs

Half the toil—and we had won to wealth in other station;
Rusted out as useless ere our worth was tried and known.
But the Hand that made us caught us up and hewed a nation
From the frozen fastness that so long was His alone.

. . . . . .

Loud we sang adventuring and lustily we jested;
Quarreled, fought, and then forgot the taunt, the blow, the jeers;
Sinned and slaved and vanished—we, the giant-men who wrested
Truth from out a dream wherein we planned surpassing years.

Anna Hempstead Branch

Anna Hempstead Branch was born at New London, Connecticut. She graduated from Smith College in 1897 and has devoted herself to literature ever since.

Her two chief volumes, *The Shoes That Danced* (1905) and *Rose of the Wind* (1910), show a singer who is less fanciful than philosophic. Often, indeed, she weighs down her simple melodies with a heavy intellectuality, but, even more often, she attains a high level of lyricism. Her lines are admirably condensed, rich in personal value as well as poetic revelation; they maintain a high and austere level. A typical poem is "The Monk in the Kitchen," which, with its spiritual loveliness and verbal felicity, is a celebration of cleanness that gives order an almost mystical nobility.

Anna Hempstead Branch

THE MONK IN THE KITCHEN

I

Order is a lovely thing;
On disarray it lays its wing,
Teaching simplicity to sing.
It has a meek and lowly grace,
Quiet as a nun's face.
Lo—I will have thee in this place!
Tranquil well of deep delight,
All things that shine through thee appear
As stones through water, sweetly clear.
Thou clarity,
That with angelic charity
Revealest beauty where thou art,
Spread thyself like a clean pool.
Then all the things that in thee are,
Shall seem more spiritual and fair,
Reflection from serener air—
Sunken shapes of many a star
In the high heavens set afar.

II

Ye stolid, homely, visible things,
Above you all brood glorious wings
Of your deep entities, set high,
Like slow moons in a hidden sky.
But you, their likenesses, are spent
Upon another element.
Truly ye are but seemings—
The shadowy cast-off gleamings

Of bright solidities. Ye seem
Soft as water, vague as dream;
Image, cast in a shifting stream.

III

What are ye?
I know not.
Brazen pan and iron pot,
Yellow brick and gray flag-stone
That my feet have trod upon—
Ye seem to me
Vessels of bright mystery.
For ye do bear a shape, and so
Though ye were made by man, I know
An inner Spirit also made,
And ye his breathings have obeyed.

IV

Shape, the strong and awful Spirit,
Laid his ancient hand on you.
He waste chaos doth inherit;
He can alter and subdue.
Verily, he doth lift up
Matter, like a sacred cup.
Into deep substance he reached, and lo
Where ye were not, ye were; and so
Out of useless nothing, ye
Groaned and laughed and came to be.
And I use you, as I can,
Wonderful uses, made for man,
Iron pot and brazen pan.

V

What are ye?
I know not;
Nor what I really do
When I move and govern you.
There is no small work unto God.
He required of us greatness;
Of his least creature
A high angelic nature,
Stature superb and bright completeness.
He sets to us no humble duty.
Each act that he would have us do
Is haloed round with strangest beauty;
Terrific deeds and cosmic tasks
Of his plainest child he asks.
When I polish the brazen pan
I hear a creature laugh afar
In the gardens of a star,
And from his burning presence run
Flaming wheels of many a sun.
Whoever makes a thing more bright,
He is an angel of all light.
When I cleanse this earthen floor
My spirit leaps to see
Bright garments trailing over it,
A cleanness made by me.
Purger of all men's thoughts and ways,
With labor do I sound Thy praise,
My work is done for Thee.

Whoever makes a thing more bright,
He is an angel of all light.
Therefore let me spread abroad
The beautiful cleanness of my God.

VI

One time in the cool of dawn
Angels came and worked with me.
The air was soft with many a wing.
They laughed amid my solitude
And cast bright looks on everything.
Sweetly of me did they ask
That they might do my common task.
And all were beautiful—but one
With garments whiter than the sun
Had such a face
Of deep, remembered grace;
That when I saw I cried—"Thou art
The great Blood-Brother of my heart.
Where have I seen thee?"—And he said,
"When we are dancing round God's throne,
How often thou art there.
Beauties from thy hands have flown
Like white doves wheeling in mid air.
Nay—thy soul remembers not?
Work on, and cleanse thy iron pot."

VII

What are we? I know not.

Anna Hempstead Branch

WHILE LOVELINESS GOES BY

Sometimes when all the world seems grey and dun
And nothing beautiful, a voice will cry,
" Look out, look out! Angels are drawing nigh! "
Then my slow burdens leave me one by one,
And swiftly does my heart arise and run
Even like a child while loveliness goes by—
And common folk seem children of the sky,
And common things seem shapèd of the sun.
Oh, pitiful! that I who love them, must
So soon perceive their shining garments fade!
And slowly, slowly, from my eyes of trust
Their flaming banners sink into a shade!
While this earth's sunshine seems the golden dust
Slow settling from that radiant cavalcade.

Amy Lowell

Amy Lowell was born in Brookline, Massachusetts, February 9, 1874, of a long line of noted publicists and poets, the first colonist (a Percival Lowell) arriving in Newburyport in 1637. James Russell Lowell was a cousin of her grandfather; Abbott Lawrence, her mother's father, was minister to England; and Abbott Lawrence Lowell, her brother, is president of Harvard University.

Miss Lowell obtained her early education through private tuition and travel abroad. These European journeys were the background upon which much of Miss Lowell's later work is unconsciously woven; her visits to France, Egypt, Turkey and

Greece bore fruit, many years later, in the exotic colors of her verse. As a young girl, she had vague aspirations toward being a writer; but it was not until 1902, when she was twenty-eight years old, that she definitely determined to be a poet. For eight years she served a rigorous and solitary apprenticeship, reading the classics of all schools and countries, studying the technique of verse, exercising her verbal power—but never attempting to publish a single line. In 1910 her first verse was printed in *The Atlantic Monthly;* two years later her first book appeared.

This volume, *A Dome of Many-colored Glass* (1912), was a strangely unpromising first book. The subjects were as conventional as the treatment of them; the influence of Keats and Tennyson was evident; the tone was soft and sentimental, almost without a trace of personality. It was a queer prologue to the vivid *Sword Blades and Poppy Seed* (1914), which marked not only an extraordinary advance but a totally new individuality. This second volume contained many distinctive poems written in the usual forms, a score of pictorial pieces illustrating Miss Lowell's identification with the Imagists (see Preface) and, possibly most important from a technical standpoint, the first appearance in English of "polyphonic prose." Of this extremely flexible form, which has only begun to be exploited, Miss Lowell, in an essay on John Gould Fletcher, has written, "'Polyphonic' means 'many-voiced,' and the form is so-called because it makes use of the 'voices' of poetry, namely: meter, *vers libre,* assonance, alliteration, rhyme and return. It employs every form of rhythm, even prose rhythm at times."

It was because of such experiments in form and technique that Miss Lowell first attracted attention and is still best known. But, beneath her preoccupation with theories and novelty of utterance, one listens to the skilled story-teller, to the designer of arabesques, to the narrator who (*vide* such poems as "A Lady," "Vintage" and the later "Bronze Horses") revivifies history with creative excitement.

Men, Women and Ghosts (1916) brims with this contagious vitality; it is richer in variety than its predecessors, swifter in movement, surer in artistry. It is, in common with all of Miss Lowell's work, best in its portrayal of the colors and sounds of physical rather than the reactions of emotional experience. She is, preëminently, the poet of the external world; her pictures are as "hard and clear" as the most uncompromising Imagist could desire. The colors with which her works are studded seem like bits of bright enamel; every leaf and flower has a lacquered brilliance. To compensate for the lack of personal warmth, Miss Lowell feverishly agitates all she touches; nothing remains quiescent. Whether she writes about a fruit shop, or a flower-garden in Roxbury, or a window-full of red slippers, or a string quartet, or a Japanese print—everything flashes, leaps, startles, spins and burns with an almost savage intensity; a dynamic speed dizzies one. Here motion frequently takes the place of emotion.

In *Can Grande's Castle* (1918), Miss Lowell achieves a broader line; the teller of stories, the bizarre decorator and the experimentalist are finally fused. The poems in this volume are only four in number—four polyphonic prose-poems of almost epic length, but they are extraordinarily varied in music, sweeping in their sense of magnitude and time. *Pictures of the Floating World* (1919) which followed is, in many ways, Miss Lowell's most personal revelation. Although there are several pages devoted to the merely dazzling and grotesque, most of these poems are in a quieter key; a new restraint gives unsuspected overtones to stanzas that have much in common with the earlier "Patterns" where the narrative, the character and the thing observed are inextricably knit.

Besides Miss Lowell's original poetry, she has made many studies in Japanese and Chinese poetry reflecting, even in her own work, their Oriental colors and contours. She has also written two volumes of critical essays: *Six French Poets* (1915) and *Tendencies in Modern American Poetry* (1917), both of them invaluable aids to the student of contemporary literature.

Amy Lowell

SOLITAIRE [1]

When night drifts along the streets of the city,
And sifts down between the uneven roofs,
My mind begins to peek and peer.
It plays at ball in odd, blue Chinese gardens,
And shakes wrought dice-cups in Pagan temples
Amid the broken flutings of white pillars.
It dances with purple and yellow crocuses in its hair,
And its feet shine as they flutter over drenched grasses.
How light and laughing my mind is,
When all good folk have put out their bedroom candles,
And the city is still.

MEETING-HOUSE HILL

I must be mad, or very tired,
When the curve of a blue bay beyond a railroad track
Is shrill and sweet to me like the sudden springing of a tune,
And the sight of a white church above thin trees in a city square
Amazes my eyes as though it were the Parthenon.
Clear, reticent, superbly final,
With the pillars of its portico refined to a cautious elegance,

[1] Reprinted by permission of the publishers, The Macmillan Company, from *Pictures of the Floating World* by Amy Lowell.

It dominates the weak trees,
And the shot of its spire
Is cool and candid,
Rising into an unresisting sky.
Strange meeting-house
Pausing a moment upon a squalid hill-top.
I watch the spire sweeping the sky,
I am dizzy with the movement of the sky;
I might be watching a mast
With its royals set full
Straining before a two-reef breeze.
I might be sighting a tea-clipper,
Tacking into the blue bay,
Just back from Canton
With her hold full of green and blue porcelain
And a Chinese coolie leaning over the rail
Gazing at the white spire
With dull, sea-spent eyes.

A LADY[1]

You are beautiful and faded,
Like an old opera tune
Played upon a harpsichord;
Or like the sun-flooded silks
Of an eighteenth-century boudoir.

[1] Reprinted by permission of the publishers, The Macmillan Company, from *Sword Blades and Poppy Seed* by Amy Lowell.

Amy Lowell

In your eyes
Smoulder the fallen roses of outlived minutes,
And the perfume of your soul
Is vague and suffusing,
With the pungence of sealed spice-jars.
Your half-tones delight me,
And I grow mad with gazing
At your blent colors.

My vigor is a new-minted penny,
Which I cast at your feet.
Gather it up from the dust
That its sparkle may amuse you.

FREE FANTASIA ON JAPANESE THEMES[1]

All the afternoon there has been a chirping of birds,
And the sun lies warm and still on the western sides
of swollen branches,
There is no wind;
Even the little twigs at the ends of the branches
do not move,
And the needles of the pines are solid
Bands of inarticulated blackness
Against the blue-white sky.
Still, but alert;
And my heart is still and alert,
Passive with sunshine,
Avid of adventure.

[1] Reprinted by permission of the publishers, The Macmillan Company, from *Pictures of the Floating World* by Amy Lowell.

I would experience new emotions,
Submit to strange enchantments,
Bend to influences
Bizarre, exotic,
Fresh with burgeoning.

I would climb a sacred mountain,
Struggle with other pilgrims up a steep path through
pine-trees,
Above to the smooth, treeless slopes,
And prostrate myself before a painted shrine,
Beating my hands upon the hot earth,
Quieting my eyes upon the distant sparkle
Of the faint spring sea.

I would recline upon a balcony
In purple curving folds of silk,
And my dress should be silvered with a pattern
Of butterflies and swallows,
And the black band of my *obi*
Should flash with gold circular threads,
And glitter when I moved.
I would lean against the railing
While you sang to me of wars
Past and to come—
Sang, and played the samisen.
Perhaps I would beat a little hand drum
In time to your singing;
Perhaps I would only watch the play of light
Upon the hilt of your two swords.

I would sit in a covered boat,
Rocking slowly to the narrow waves of a river,
While above us, an arc of moving lanterns,
Curved a bridge,
A hiss of gold
Blooming out of darkness,
Rockets exploded,
And died in a soft dripping of colored stars.
We would float between the high trestles,
And drift away from other boats,
Until the rockets flared soundless,
And their falling stars hung silent in the sky,
Like wistaria clusters above the ancient entrance of a temple.

I would anything
Rather than this cold paper;
With outside, the quiet sun on the sides of burgeoning branches,
And inside, only my books.

MADONNA OF THE EVENING FLOWERS[1]

All day long I have been working,
Now I am tired.
I call: "Where are you?"
But there is only the oak tree rustling in the wind.
The house is very quiet,
The sun shines in on your books,

[1] Reprinted by permission of the publishers, The Macmillan Company, from *Pictures of the Floating World* by Amy Lowell.

Amy Lowell

On your scissors and thimble just put down,
But you are not there.
Suddenly I am lonely:
Where are you?
I go about searching.

Then I see you,
Standing under a spire of pale blue larkspur,
With a basket of roses on your arm.
You are cool, like silver,
And you smile.
I think the Canterbury bells are playing little tunes,
You tell me that the peonies need spraying,
That the columbines have overrun all bounds,
That the pyrus japonica should be cut back and
rounded.
You tell me these things.
But I look at you, heart of silver,
White heart-flame of polished silver,
Burning beneath the blue steeples of the larkspur,
And I long to kneel instantly at your feet,
While all about us peal the loud, sweet *Te Deums*
of the Canterbury bells.

WIND AND SILVER

Greatly shining,
The Autumn moon floats in the thin sky;
And the fish-ponds shake their backs and flash their
dragon scales
As she passes over them.

Ridgely Torrence

(Frederic) Ridgely Torrence was born at Xenia, Ohio, November 27, 1875, and was educated at Miami and Princeton University. For several years he was librarian of the Astor Library in New York City (1897-1901) and has been on several editorial staffs since then.

His first volume, *The House of a Hundred Lights* (1900), bears the grave subtitle "A Psalm of Experience after Reading a Couplet of Bidpai" and is a half-whimsical, half-searching hodge-podge of philosophy, love lyrics, artlessness and impudence. The influence of Omar Khayyám and Richard Hovey is obvious but not too dominant; Torrence saves himself on the very verge of sentimentality and rhetoric by a chuckle, an adroit right-about-face.

Torrence's subsequent uncollected verses have a deeper force, a more concentrated fire. In "The Bird and the Tree" and "Eye-Witness," he has caught something more than the colors of certain localities—particularly of the dark belt. They are as eloquent and moving as his *Granny Maumee and Other Plays* (1917), which owe their power not only to Torrence's gift as a poet but to his sympathy as a folk-lyrist.

THE BIRD AND THE TREE

Blackbird, blackbird in the cage,
There's something wrong to-night.
Far off the sheriff's footfall dies,
The minutes crawl like last year's flies
Between the bars, and like an age
The hours are long to-night.

The sky is like a heavy lid
Out here beyond the door to-night.

Ridgely Torrence

What's that? A mutter down the street.
What's that? The sound of yells and feet
For what you didn't do or did
You'll pay the score to-night.

No use to reek with reddened sweat,
No use to whimper and to sweat.
They've got the rope; they've got the guns,
They've got the courage and the guns;
An' that's the reason why to-night
No use to ask them any more.
They'll fire the answer through the door—
You're out to die to-night.

There where the lonely cross-road lies,
There is no place to make replies;
But silence, inch by inch, is there,
And the right limb for a lynch is there;
And a lean daw waits for both your eyes,
Blackbird.

Perhaps you'll meet again some place.
Look for the mask upon the face;
That's the way you'll know them there—
A white mask to hide the face.
And you can halt and show them there
The things that they are deaf to now,
And they can tell you what they meant—
To wash the blood with blood. But how
If you are innocent?

Blackbird singer, blackbird mute,
They choked the seed you might have found.
Out of a thorny field you go—
For you it may be better so—
And leave the sowers of the ground
To eat the harvest of the fruit,
Blackbird.

THE SON

(*Southern Ohio Market Town*)

I heard an old farm-wife,
Selling some barley,
Mingle her life with life
And the name "Charley."

Saying: "The crop's all in,
We're about through now;
Long nights will soon begin,
We're just us two now.

"Twelve bushels at sixty cents,
It's all I carried—
He sickened making fence;
He was to be married—

"It feels like frost was near—
His hair was curly.
The spring was late that year,
But the harvest early."

Robert Frost

Although known as the chief interpreter of the new New England, Robert (Lee) Frost was born in San Francisco, California, March 26, 1875. At the age of ten he came East to the towns and hills where, for eight generations, his forefathers had lived. After graduating from the high school at Lawrence, Massachusetts, in 1892, Frost entered Dartmouth College, where he remained only a few months. The routine of study was too much for him and, determined to keep his mind free for creative work, he decided to earn his living and became a bobbin boy in one of the mills at Lawrence. He had already begun to write poetry; a few of his verses had appeared in *The Independent.* But the strange soil-flavored quality which even then distinguished his lines was not relished by the editors, and the very magazines to which he sent poems that today are famous, rejected his verse with amazing unanimity. For twenty years Frost continued to write his highly characteristic work in spite of the discouraging apathy, and for twenty years the poet remained unknown.

In 1897, two years after his marriage, Frost moved his family to Cambridge, Massachusetts, and entered Harvard in a final determination to achieve culture. This time he followed the cut-and-dried curriculum for two years, but at the end of that period he stopped trying to learn and started to teach. For three years he taught school, made shoes, edited a weekly paper, and in 1900 became a farmer at Derry, New Hampshire. During the next eleven years Frost labored to wrest a living from the stubborn rocky hills with scant success. Loneliness claimed him for its own; the ground refused to give him a living; the literary world continued to remain oblivious of his existence. Frost sought a change of environment and, after a few years' teaching at Derry and Plymouth, New Hampshire, sold his farm and, with his wife and four children, sailed for England in September, 1912.

For the first time in his life, Frost moved in a literary world. London was a hot-bed of poets; groups merged, dissolved and separated over night; controversy and creation were in the air.

Frost took his collection of poems to a publisher with few hopes, went back to the suburban town of Beaconsfield and turned to other matters. A few months later *A Boy's Will* (1913), his first collection, was published and Frost was recognized at once as one of the few authentic voices of modern poetry.

A Boy's Will, unlike the later volumes, is frankly subjective; original in outlook and idiom in spite of certain reminiscences of Browning. Chiefly lyrical, this volume, lacking the concentrated emotion of his subsequent works, is a significant introduction to the following book, which has become a contemporary classic. Early in 1914, Frost leased a small place in Gloucestershire, his neighbors being the poets Lascelles Abercrombie and W. W. Gibson. In the spring of the same year, *North of Boston* (1914), one of the most intensely American books ever printed, was published in England. (See Preface.) This is, as he has called it, a "book of people." And it is more than that—it is a book of backgrounds as living and dramatic as the people they overshadow. Frost vivifies a stone wall, an empty cottage, an apple-tree, a mountain, a forgotten wood-pile left

> To warm the frozen swamp as best it could
> With the slow, smokeless burning of decay.

North of Boston, like its successor, contains much of the finest poetry of our time. Rich in its actualities, richer in its spiritual values, every line moves with the double force of observation and implication. The first poem in the books illustrates this power of character and symbolism. Although Frost is not arguing for anything in particular, one senses here something more than the subterranean enemies of walls. In "Mending Wall," we see two elemental and opposed forces. "Something there is that doesn't love a wall," insists the seeker after causes; "Good fences make good neighbors," doggedly maintains the literal-minded lover of traditions. Here, beneath the whimsical turns and pungency of expression, we have the

essence of nationalism versus the internationalist; the struggle between a blind responsibility and a pagan iconoclasm.

So with all of Frost's characters. Like the worn-out incompetent in "The Death of the Hired Man" (one of the finest *genre* pictures of our time), the country boy in "Birches," or the positive, tight-lipped old lady in "The Black Cottage," his people are always intensified through the poet's circumlocutory but precise psychology. They remain close to their soil. Frost's monologs and dramatic idyls, written in a conversational blank verse, establish the connection between the vernacular and the language of literature; they remain rooted in realism. But Frost is never a photographic realist. "There are," he once said, "two types of realist—the one who offers a good deal of dirt with his potato to show that it is a real one; and the one who is satisfied with the potato brushed clean. I'm inclined to be the second kind. . . . To me, the thing that art does for life is to strip it to form."

In March, 1915, Frost came back to America—to a hill outside of Franconia, New Hampshire, to be precise. *North of Boston* had been published in the United States and its author, who had left the country an unknown writer, returned to find himself famous. *Mountain Interval,* containing some of Frost's most beautiful poems ("Birches," "An Old Man's Winter Night," "The Hill Wife"), appeared in 1916. The idiom is the same as in the earlier volumes, but the notes are more varied, the convictions are stronger. The essential things are unchanged. The first poem in Frost's first book sums it up:

> They would not find me changed from him they knew—
> Only more sure of all I thought was true.

The fanciful by-play, the sly banter, so characteristic of this poet, has made his grimness far less "gray" than some of his critics are willing to admit. This elfin whimsy winks through the broad bucolic humor of "The Cow in Apple Time," the mock pity of "The Road Not Taken," the tenderness of "The Runaway" and the lovely apostrophe to an orchard in "Good-Bye and Keep Cold."

Robert Frost

Frost taught at Amherst College from 1916 to 1919, but found that his association with scholastic life took too much of his creative energy. In 1920, therefore, he bought a few acres in Vermont and devoted himself once more to the double labors of farmer and poet. Through his lyrics as well as his quasi-narratives, he has uttered (and is voicing) some of the deepest and richest notes in American poetry.

MENDING WALL

Something there is that doesn't love a wall,
That sends the frozen-ground-swell under it,
And spills the upper boulders in the sun;
And makes gaps even two can pass abreast.
The work of hunters is another thing:
I have come after them and made repair
Where they have left not one stone on a stone,
But they would have the rabbit out of hiding,
To please the yelping dogs. The gaps I mean,
No one has seen them made or heard them made,
But at spring mending-time we find them there.
I let my neighbor know beyond the hill;
And on a day we meet to walk the line
And set the wall between us once again.
We keep the wall between us as we go.
To each the boulders that have fallen to each.
And some are loaves and some so nearly balls
We have to use a spell to make them balance:
"Stay where you are until our backs are turned!"
We wear our fingers rough with handling them.

Oh, just another kind of outdoor game,
One on a side. It comes to little more:
He is all pine and I am apple-orchard.
My apple trees will never get across
And eat the cones under his pines, I tell him.
He only says, "Good fences make good neighbors."
Spring is the mischief in me, and I wonder
If I could put a notion in his head:
"*Why* do they make good neighbors? Isn't it
Where there are cows? But here there are no cows.
Before I built a wall I'd ask to know
What I was walling in or walling out,
And to whom I was like to give offence.
Something there is that doesn't love a wall,
That wants it down!" I could say "Elves" to him,
But it's not elves exactly, and I'd rather
He said it for himself. I see him there,
Bringing a stone grasped firmly by the top
In each hand, like an old-stone savage armed.
He moves in darkness as it seems to me,
Not of woods only and the shade of trees.
He will not go behind his father's saying,
And he likes having thought of it so well
He says again, "Good fences make good neighbors."

THE TUFT OF FLOWERS

I went to turn the grass once after one
Who mowed it in the dew before the sun.

The dew was gone that made his blade so keen
Before I came to view the levelled scene.

I looked for him behind an isle of trees;
I listened for his whetstone on the breeze.

But he had gone his way, the grass all mown,
And I must be, as he had been,—alone,

"As all must be," I said within my heart,
"Whether they work together or apart."

But as I said it, swift there passed me by
On noiseless wing a bewildered butterfly,

Seeking with memories grown dim over night
Some resting flower of yesterday's delight.

And once I marked his flight go round and round,
As where some flower lay withering on the ground.

And then he flew as far as eye could see,
And then on tremulous wing came back to me.

I thought of questions that have no reply,
And would have turned to toss the grass to dry;

But he turned first, and led my eye to look
At a tall tuft of flowers beside a brook,

A leaping tongue of bloom the scythe had spared
Beside a reedy brook the scythe had bared.

I left my place to know them by their name,
Finding them butterfly-weed when I came.

The mower in the dew had loved them thus,
By leaving them to flourish, not for us,

Nor yet to draw one thought of ours to him,
But from sheer morning gladness at the brim.

The butterfly and I had lit upon,
Nevertheless, a message from the dawn,

That made me hear the wakening birds around,
And hear his long scythe whispering to the ground,

And feel a spirit kindred to my own;
So that henceforth I worked no more alone;

But glad with him, I worked as with his aid,
And weary, sought at noon with him the shade;

And dreaming, as it were, held brotherly speech
With one whose thought I had not hoped to reach.

"Men work together," I told him from the heart,
"Whether they work together or apart."

THE DEATH OF THE HIRED MAN

Mary sat musing on the lamp-flame at the table
Waiting for Warren. When she heard his step,
She ran on tip-toe down the darkened passage
To meet him in the doorway with the news
And put him on his guard. "Silas is back."
She pushed him outward with her through the door
And shut it after her. "Be kind," she said.
She took the market things from Warren's arms
And set them on the porch, then drew him down
To sit beside her on the wooden steps.

"When was I ever anything but kind to him?
But I'll not have the fellow back," he said.
"I told him so last haying, didn't I?
'If he left then,' I said, 'that ended it.'
What good is he? Who else will harbour him
At his age for the little he can do?
What help he is there's no depending on.
Off he goes always when I need him most.
'He thinks he ought to earn a little pay,
Enough at least to buy tobacco with,
So he won't have to beg and be beholden.'
'All right,' I say, 'I can't afford to pay
Any fixed wages, though I wish I could.'
'Someone else can.' 'Then someone else will have to.'
I shouldn't mind his bettering himself
If that was what it was. You can be certain,

When he begins like that, there's someone at him
Trying to coax him off with pocket-money,—
In haying time, when any help is scarce.
In winter he comes back to us. I'm done."

"Sh! not so loud: he'll hear you," Mary said.
"I want him to: he'll have to soon or late."

"He's worn out. He's asleep beside the stove.
When I came up from Rowe's I found him here,
Huddled against the barn-door fast asleep,
A miserable sight, and frightening, too—
You needn't smile—I didn't recognize him—
I wasn't looking for him—and he's changed.
Wait till you see."

"Where did you say he'd been?"

"He didn't say. I dragged him to the house,
And gave him tea and tried to make him smoke.
I tried to make him talk about his travels.
Nothing would do: he just kept nodding off."

"What did he say? Did he say anything?"

"But little."

"Anything? Mary, confess
He said he'd come to ditch the meadow for me."

"Warren!"

"But did he? I just want to know."

"Of course he did. What would you have him say?
Surely you wouldn't grudge the poor old man,
Some humble way to save his self-respect.
He added, if you really care to know,
He meant to clear the upper pasture, too.
That sounds like something you have heard before?
Warren, I wish you could have heard the way
He jumbled everything. I stopped to look
Two or three times—he made me feel so queer—
To see if he was talking in his sleep.
He ran on Harold Wilson—you remember—
The boy you had in haying four years since.
He's finished school, and teaching in his college.
Silas declares you'll have to get him back.
He says they two will make a team for work:
Between them they will lay this farm as smooth!
The way he mixed that in with other things.
He thinks young Wilson a likely lad, though daft
On education—you know how they fought
All through July under the blazing sun,
Silas up on the cart to build the load,
Harold along beside to pitch it on."

"Yes, I took care to keep well out of earshot."

"Well, those days trouble Silas like a dream.
You wouldn't think they would. How some things linger!
Harold's young college boy's assurance piqued him.

Silas has walked that far no doubt to-day.
Why didn't he go there? His brother's rich,
A somebody—director in the bank."

"He never told us that."

"We know it though."

"I think his brother ought to help, of course.
I'll see to that if there is need. He ought of right
To take him in, and might be willing to—
He may be better than appearances.
But have some pity on Silas. Do you think
If he'd had any pride in claiming kin
Or anything he looked for from his brother,
He'd keep so still about him all this time?"

"I wonder what's between them."

"I can tell you.
Silas is what he is—we wouldn't mind him—
But just the kind that kinsfolk can't abide.
He never did a thing so very bad.
He don't know why he isn't quite as good
As anyone. He won't be made ashamed
To please his brother, worthless though he is."

"I can't think Si ever hurt anyone."

"No, but he hurt my heart the way he lay
And rolled his old head on that sharp-edged chair-back.
He wouldn't let me put him on the lounge.
You must go in and see what you can do.

I made the bed up for him there to-night.
You'll be surprised at him—how much he's broken.
His working days are done; I'm sure of it."

"I'd not be in a hurry to say that."

"I haven't been. Go, look, see for yourself.
But, Warren, please remember how it is:
He's come to help you ditch the meadow.
He has a plan. You mustn't laugh at him.
He may not speak of it, and then he may.
I'll sit and see if that small sailing cloud
Will hit or miss the moon."
It hit the moon.
Then there were three there, making a dim row,
The moon, the little silver cloud, and she.

Warren returned—too soon, it seemed to her,
Slipped to her side, caught up her hand and waited.

"Warren," she questioned.

"Dead," was all he answered.

GOOD-BYE AND KEEP COLD

This saying good-bye on the verge of the dark
And cold to an orchard so young in the bark,
Reminds me of all that can happen to harm
An orchard away at the end of the farm
All winter cut off by a hill from the house.
I don't want it girdled by rabbit and mouse,

I don't want it dreamily nibbled for browse
By deer, and I don't want it budded by grouse,
(If certain it wouldn't be idle to call,
I'd summon grouse, rabbit and deer to the wall
And warn them away with a stick for a gun.)
I don't want it stirred by the heat of the sun.
(We made it secure against being, I hope,
By setting it out on a northerly slope.)
No orchard's the worse for the wintriest storm,
But one thing about it, it mustn't get warm.
" How often already you've had to be told
Keep cold, young orchard. Good-bye and keep cold.
Dread fifty above more than fifty below."
I have to be gone for a season or so;
My business awhile is with different trees,
Less carefully nurtured, less fruitful than these
And such as is done to their wood with an ax—
Maples and birches and tamaracks.
I wish I could promise to lie in the night
And share in an orchard's arboreal plight,
When slowly (and nobody comes with a light!)
Its heart sinks lower under the sod;
But something has to be left to God.

THE RUNAWAY

Once when the snow of the year was beginning to fall,
We stopped by a mountain pasture to say " Whose colt? "
A little Morgan had one forefoot on the wall,
The other curled at his breast. He dipped his head

And snorted to us. And then he had to bolt.
We heard the miniature thunder where he fled
And we saw him or thought we saw him dim and grey,
Like a shadow against the curtain of falling flakes.
" I think the little fellow's afraid of the snow.
He isn't winter-broken. It isn't play
With the little fellow at all. He's running away.
I doubt if even his mother could tell him, ' Sakes,
It's only weather.' He'd think she didn't know!
Where is his mother? He can't be out alone."
And now he comes again with a clatter of stone
And mounts the wall again with whited eyes
And all his tail that isn't hair up straight.
He shudders his coat as if to throw off flies.
" Whoever it is that leaves him out so late,
When other creatures have gone to stall and bin,
Ought to be told to come and take him in."

BIRCHES

When I see birches bend to left and right
Across the line of straighter darker trees,
I like to think some boy's been swinging them.
But swinging doesn't bend them down to stay.
Ice-storms do that. Often you must have seen them
Loaded with ice a sunny winter morning
After a rain. They click upon themselves
As the breeze rises, and turn many-colored
As the stir cracks and crazes their enamel.

Soon the sun's warmth makes them shed crystal shells
Shattering and avalanching on the snow-crust—
Such heaps of broken glass to sweep away
You'd think the inner dome of heaven had fallen.
They are dragged to the withered bracken by the load,
And they seem not to break; though once they are bowed
So low for long, they never right themselves:
You may see their trunks arching in the woods
Years afterwards, trailing their leaves on the ground
Like girls on hands and knees that throw their hair
Before them over their heads to dry in the sun.
But I was going to say when Truth broke in
With all her matter-of-fact about the ice-storm
(Now am I free to be poetical?)
I should prefer to have some boy bend them
As he went out and in to fetch the cows—
Some boy too far from town to learn baseball,
Whose only play was what he found himself,
Summer or winter, and could play alone.
One by one he subdued his father's trees
By riding them down over and over again
Until he took the stiffness out of them,
And not one but hung limp, not one was left
For him to conquer. He learned all there was
To learn about not launching out too soon
And so not carrying the tree away
Clear to the ground. He always kept his poise
To the top branches, climbing carefully
With the same pains you use to fill a cup
Up to the brim, and even above the brim.

Then he flung outward, feet first, with a swish,
Kicking his way down through the air to the ground.

So was I once myself a swinger of birches;
And so I dream of going back to be.
It's when I'm weary of considerations,
And life is too much like a pathless wood
Where your face burns and tickles with the cobwebs
Broken across it, and one eye is weeping
From a twig's having lashed across it open.
I'd like to get away from earth awhile
And then come back to it and begin over.
May no fate wilfully misunderstand me
And half grant what I wish and snatch me away
Not to return. Earth's the right place for love:
I don't know where it's likely to go better.
I'd like to go by climbing a birch tree,
And climb black branches up a snow-white trunk
Toward heaven, till the tree could bear no more,
But dipped its top and set me down again.
That would be good both going and coming back.
One could do worse than be a swinger of birches.

FRAGMENTARY BLUE

Why make so much of fragmentary blue
In here and there a bird or butterfly
Or flower or wearing-stone or open eye,
When heaven presents in sheets the solid hue?

Since earth is earth, perhaps, not heaven (as yet)—
Though some savants make earth include the sky;
And blue so far above us comes so high
It only gives our wish for blue a whet.

THE ONSET

Always the same when on a fated night
At last the gathered snow lets down as white
As may be in dark woods and with a song
It shall not make again all winter long—
Of hissing on the yet uncovered ground,—
I almost stumble looking up and round,
As one who, overtaken by the end,
Gives up his errand and lets death descend
Upon him where he is, with nothing done
To evil, no important triumph won
More than if life had never been begun.

Yet all the precedent is on my side:
I know that winter death has never tried
The earth but it has failed; the snow may heap
In long storms an undrifted four feet deep
As measured against maple, birch and oak;
It cannot check the Peeper's silver croak;
And I shall see the snow all go down hill
In water of a slender April rill
That flashes tail through last year's withered brake
And dead weeds like a disappearing snake.
Nothing will be left white but here a birch
And there a clump of houses with a church.

William Ellery Leonard

William Ellery Leonard was born at Plainfield, New Jersey, January 25, 1876. He received his A.M. at Harvard in 1899 and completed his studies at the Universities of Göttingen and Bonn. After traveling for several years throughout Europe, he became a teacher and has been professor of English in the University of Wisconsin since 1906.

The Vaunt of Man (1912) is Leonard's most representative volume. Traditional in form and material, it is anything but conservative in spirit. Leonard's insurrectionary fervor speaks sonorously in the simplest of his quatrains and the strictest of his sonnets. This protesting passion is given an even wider sweep in *The Lynching Bee* (1920), the title-poem being a terrific indictment in which the poet's outrage speaks with a new ironism.

Besides his original poetry, Leonard has published several volumes of translations from the Greek and Latin as well as a series of paraphrases of the fables of Æsop.

THE IMAGE OF DELIGHT

O how came I that loved stars, moon, and flame,
And unimaginable wind and sea,
All inner shrines and temples of the free,
Legends and hopes and golden books of fame;
I that upon the mountain carved my name
With cliffs and clouds and eagles over me,
O how came I to stoop to loving thee—
I that had never stooped before to shame?

O 'twas not thee! Too eager of a white
Far beauty and a voice to answer mine,
Myself I built an image of delight,
Which all one purple day I deemed divine—

Carl Sandburg

Carl (August) Sandburg was born of Swedish stock at Galesburg, Illinois, January 6, 1878. His schooling was haphazard; at thirteen he went to work on a milk wagon. During the next six years he was, in rapid succession, porter in a barber shop, scene-shifter in a cheap theatre, truck-handler in a brickyard, turner apprentice in a pottery, dish-washer in Denver and Omaha hotels, harvest hand in Kansas wheat fields. These tasks equipped him, as no amount of learning could have done, to be the laureate of industrial America. When war with Spain was declared in 1898, Sandburg, avid for fresh adventure, enlisted in Company C., Sixth Illinois Volunteers.

On his return from the campaign in Porto Rico, Sandburg entered Lombard College in Galesburg and, for the first time, began to think in terms of literature. He had already seen a great deal of the world from the roaring alleys of great cities as well as from the underside of box-cars; he had loafed, fought and expressed himself richly. So, what with the fact that the "terrible Swede," as captain of the basket-ball team, won a series of new victories, it is little wonder that he was idolized by his class-mates and elected editor-in-chief of the college paper.

After leaving college he did all manner of things to earn a living. He was advertising manager for a department store and worked as district organizer for the Social-Democratic party of Wisconsin. He became a salesman, a pamphleteer, a newspaperman. On the staff of a business magazine, he became a "safety first" expert; his articles on accident prevention bringing him before manufacturers' conventions where he talked about machinery safeguards and methods found successful in reducing injuries in factory organizations.

In 1904, Sandburg published the proverbial "slender sheaf"; a tiny pamphlet of twenty-two poems, uneven in quality but strangely like the work of the mature Sandburg in feeling. What is more, these experiments anticipated the very inflection of the later poems, with their spiritual kinship to Henley, Lincoln and Whitman; several of these early experiments (with

the exception of the rhymed verses) might be placed, without seeming incongruous, in the most recent collection of Sandburg's pieces. The idiom of *Smoke and Steel* (1920) is more intensified, but it is the same idiom as that of "Milville" (1903), which begins:

Down in southern New Jersey they make glass.
By day and by night, the fires burn on in Milville and bid the sand let in the light.

Meanwhile the newspaperman was having a hard struggle to keep the poet alive. Until he was thirty-six years old, Sandburg was totally unknown to the literary world. In 1914 a group of his poems appeared in *Poetry; A Magazine of Verse;* later the same year one of the group (the now famous "Chicago") was awarded the Levinson prize of two hundred dollars. A little more than a year later his first, full-fledged book was published, and Sandburg—tardily but triumphantly—had arrived.

Chicago Poems (1916) is full of ferment; it seethes with a direct poetry surcharged with tremendous energy. Here is an almost animal exultation that is also an exaltation. Sandburg's speech is simple and powerful; he uses slang as freely (and beautifully) as his predecessors used the now archaic tongue of their times. (See Preface.) Immediately the cries of protest were heard: Sandburg was coarse and brutal; his work ugly and distorted; his language unrefined, unfit for poetry. His detractors forgot that Sandburg was only brutal when dealing with brutality; that beneath his toughness, he was one of the tenderest of living poets; that, when he used colloquialisms and a richly metaphorical slang, he was searching for new poetic values in "limber, lasting, fierce words"—unconsciously answering Whitman who asked, "Do you suppose the liberties and brawn of These States have to do only with delicate lady-words? With gloved gentleman-words?"

Cornhuskers (1918) is another step forward; it is fully as sweeping as its forerunner and far more sensitive. The gain

in power and restraint is evident in the very first poem, a magnificent panoramic vision of the prairie. Here is something of the surge of a Norse saga; *Cornhuskers* is keen with a salty vigor, a vast sympathy for all that is splendid and terrible in Nature. But the raw violence is restrained to the point of mysticism. There are, in this volume, dozens of those delicate perceptions of beauty that must astonish those who think that Sandburg can write only a big-fisted, rough-neck sort of poetry. "Cool Tombs," one of the most poignant lyrics of our time, moves with a new music; "Grass" whispers as quietly as the earlier "Fog" stole in on stealthy, cat feet.

Smoke and Steel (1920) is the synthesis and sublimation of its predecessors. In this ripest of his collections, Sandburg has fused mood, accent and image in a new intensity. It is a fit setting for the title poem; it is, in spite of certain over-mystical accents, an epic of industrialism. Smoke-belching chimneys are here, quarries and great boulders of iron-ribbed rock; here are titanic visions: the dreams of men and machinery. And silence is here—the silence of sleeping tenements and sun-soaked cornfields. *Smoke and Steel* is a rich amalgam; indigenous to the core. And what makes it so vital is Sandburg's own spirit: a never-sated joy in existence, a continually fresh delight in the variety and wonder of life.

COOL TOMBS

When Abraham Lincoln was shoveled into the tombs,
he forgot the copperheads and the assassin . . . in
the dust, in the cool tombs.

And Ulysses Grant lost all thought of con men and Wall
Street, cash and collateral turned ashes . . . in
the dust, in the cool tombs.

Pocahontas' body, lovely as a poplar, sweet as a red haw
in November or a pawpaw in May, did she wonder?
does she remember? . . . in the dust, in the cool
tombs?

Take any streetful of people buying clothes and gro-
ceries, cheering a hero or throwing confetti and
blowing tin horns . . . tell me if the lovers are
losers . . . tell me if any get more than the
lovers . . . in the dust . . . in the cool tombs.

FOG

The fog comes
on little cat feet.

It sits looking
over harbor and city
on silent haunches
and then moves on.

FROM "SMOKE AND STEEL"

Smoke of the fields in spring is one,
Smoke of the leaves in autumn another.
Smoke of a steel-mill roof or a battleship funnel,
They all go up in a line with a smokestack,
Or they twist . . . in the slow twist . . . of the wind.

If the north wind comes they run to the south.
If the west wind comes they run to the east.
By this sign
all smokes
know each other.
Smoke of the fields in spring and leaves in autumn,
Smoke of the finished steel, chilled and blue,
By the oath of work they swear: "I know you."

Hunted and hissed from the center
Deep down long ago when God made us over,
Deep down are the cinders we came from—
You and I and our heads of smoke.

. . . . . .

Some of the smokes God dropped on the job
Cross on the sky and count our years
And sing in the secrets of our numbers;
Sing their dawns and sing their evenings,
Sing an old log-fire song:
You may put the damper up,
You may put the damper down,
The smoke goes up the chimney just the same.

Smoke of a city sunset skyline,
Smoke of a country dusk horizon—
They cross on the sky and count our years.

. . . . . .

Smoke of a brick-red dust
Winds on a spiral
Out of the stacks

For a hidden and glimpsing moon.
This, said the bar-iron shed to the blooming mill,
This is the slang of coal and steel.
The day-gang hands it to the night-gang,
The night-gang hands it back.

Stammer at the slang of this—
Let us understand half of it.
In the rolling mills and sheet mills,
In the harr and boom of the blast fires,
The smoke changes its shadow
And men change their shadow;
A nigger, a wop, a bohunk changes.

A bar of steel—it is only
Smoke at the heart of it, smoke and the blood of a man.
A runner of fire ran in it, ran out, ran somewhere else,
And left smoke and the blood of a man
And the finished steel, chilled and blue.

So fire runs in, runs out, runs somewhere else again,
And the bar of steel is a gun, a wheel, a nail, a shovel,
A rudder under the sea, a steering-gear in the sky;
And always dark in the heart and through it,
Smoke and the blood of a man.
Pittsburg, Youngstown, Gary—they make their steel with men.

In the blood of men and the ink of chimneys
The smoke nights write their oaths:

Smoke into steel and blood into steel;
Homestead, Braddock, Birmingham, they make their steel with men.
Smoke and blood is the mix of steel.

The birdmen drone
In the blue; it is steel
a motor sings and zooms.

. . . . . .

Steel barb-wire around The Works.
Steel guns in the holsters of the guards at the gates of The Works.
Steel ore-boats bring the loads clawed from the earth by steel, lifted and lugged by arms of steel, sung on its way by the clanking clam-shells.
The runners now, the handlers now, are steel; they dig and clutch and haul; they hoist their automatic knuckles from job to job; they are steel making steel.
Fire and dust and air fight in the furnaces; the pour is timed, the billets wriggle; the clinkers are dumped:
Liners on the sea, skyscrapers on the land; diving steel in the sea, climbing steel in the sky.

BLUE ISLAND INTERSECTION

Six street ends come together here.
They feed people and wagons into the center.
In and out all day horses with thoughts of nose-bags,
Men with shovels, women with baskets and baby buggies.

Six ends of streets and no sleep for them all day.
The people and wagons come and go, out and in.
Triangles of banks and drug stores watch.
The policemen whistle, the trolley cars bump:
Wheels, wheels, feet, feet, all day.

In the false dawn when the chickens blink
And the east shakes a lazy baby toe at to-morrow,
And the east fixes a pink half-eye this way,
In the time when only one milk wagon crosses
These three streets, these six street ends,
It is the sleep time and they rest.
The triangle banks and drug stores rest.
The policeman is gone, his star and gun sleep.
The owl car blutters along in a sleep-walk.

CLEAN CURTAINS

New neighbors came to the corner house at Congress and Green streets.

The look of their clean white curtains was the same as the rim of a nun's bonnet.

One way was an oyster pail factory, one way they made candy, one way paper boxes, strawboard cartons.

The warehouse trucks shook the dust of the ways loose and the wheels whirled dust—there was dust of hoof and wagon wheel and rubber tire—dust of police

and fire wagons—dust of the winds that circled at midnights and noon listening to no prayers.

"O mother, I know the heart of you," I sang passing the rim of a nun's bonnet—O white curtains—and people clean as the prayers of Jesus here in the faded ramshackle at Congress and Green.

Dust and the thundering trucks won—the barrages of the street wheels and the lawless wind took their way—was it five weeks or six the little mother, the new neighbors, battled and then took away the white prayers in the windows?

A. E. F.

There will be a rusty gun on the wall, sweetheart,
The rifle grooves curling with flakes of rust.
A spider will make a silver string nest in the darkest, warmest corner of it.
The trigger and the range-finder, they too will be rusty.
And no hands will polish the gun, and it will hang on the wall.
Forefingers and thumbs will point absently and casually toward it.
It will be spoken among half-forgotten, wished-to-be-forgotten things.
They will tell the spider: Go on, you're doing good work.

Carl Sandburg

NOCTURNE IN A DESERTED BRICKYARD

Stuff of the moon
Runs on the lapping sand
Out to the longest shadows.
Under the curving willows,
And round the creep of the wave line,
Fluxions of yellow and dusk on the waters
Make a wide dreaming pansy of an old pond in the night.

GRASS

Pile the bodies high at Austerlitz and Waterloo.
Shovel them under and let me work—
I am the grass; I cover all.

And pile them high at Gettysburg
And pile them high at Ypres and Verdun.
Shovel them under and let me work.
Two years, ten years, and passengers ask the conductor:
What place is this?
Where are we now?

I am the grass.
Let me work.

Adelaide Crapsey

Adelaide Crapsey was born, September 9, 1878, at Rochester, New York, where she spent her childhood. She entered Vassar College in 1897, graduating with the class of 1901. Two years

after graduation she began work as a teacher of History and Literature, in Kemper Hall, Kenosha, Wisconsin, where she had attended preparatory school. In 1905 she went abroad, studying archæology in Rome. After her return she essayed to teach again but her failing health compelled her to discontinue and though she became instructor in Poetics at Smith College in 1911, the burden was too great for her.

Prior to this time she had written little verse, her chief work being an analysis of English metrics, an investigation (which she never finished) of certain problems in verse structure. In 1913, after her breakdown, she began to write those brief lines which, like some of Emily Dickinson's, are so precise and poignant. She was particularly happy in her "Cinquains," a form that she originated. These five-line stanzas in the strictest possible structure (the lines having, respectively, two, four, six, eight and two syllables) doubtless owe something to the Japanese *hokku,* but Adelaide Crapsey saturated them with her own fragile loveliness.

"Her death," writes her friend, Claude Bragdon, "was tragic. Full of the desire of life she was forced to go, leaving her work all unfinished." She died at Saranac Lake, New York, on October 8, 1914. Her small volume *Verse* appeared in 1915, and a part of the unfinished *Study in English Metrics* was posthumously published in 1918.

THREE CINQUAINS

NOVEMBER NIGHT

Listen . . .
With faint dry sound,
Like steps of passing ghosts,
The leaves, frost-crisp'd, break from the trees
And fall.

Adelaide Crapsey

TRIAD

These be
Three silent things:
The falling snow . . . the hour
Before the dawn . . . the mouth of one
Just dead.

THE WARNING

Just now,
Out of the strange
Still dusk . . . as strange, as still . . .
A white moth flew. Why am I grown
So cold?

ON SEEING WEATHER-BEATEN TREES

Is it as plainly in our living shown,
By slant and twist, which way the wind hath blown?

Grace Hazard Conkling

Grace Hazard Conkling was born in 1878 in New York City. After graduating from Smith College in 1899, she studied music at the University of Heidelberg (1902-3) and Paris (1903-4). Since 1914 she has been a teacher of English at Smith College, where she has done much to create an alert interest in poetry.

Mrs. Conkling's *Afternoons of April* (1915) and *Wilderness Songs* (1920) are full of a graciousness that rarely grows cloying. Gentle colors and a gentler sadness are here; soft music, the whisper of flutes above a plaintive English horn, rises from her pages. But the poems are by no means monotonous. A

fragrant whimsicality, a child-like freshness vivifies poems like "The Whole Duty of Berkshire Brooks," "Dilemma" and "Frost on a Window," which reminds one of the manner of her amazing daughter, Hilda, (see page 394).

THE WHOLE DUTY OF BERKSHIRE BROOKS

To build the trout a crystal stair;
To comb the hillside's thick green hair;
To water jewel-weed and rushes;
To teach first notes to baby thrushes;
To flavor raspberry and apple
And make a whirling pool to dapple
With scattered gold of late October;
To urge wise laughter on the sober
And lend a dream to those who laugh;
To chant the beetle's epitaph;
To mirror the blue dragonfly,
Frail air-plane of a slender sky;
Over the stones to lull and leap
Herding the bubbles like white sheep;
The claims of worry to deny,
And whisper sorrow into sleep!

FROST ON A WINDOW

This forest looks the way
Nightingales sound.
Tall larches lilt and sway
Above the glittering ground:
The wild white cherry spray
Scatters radiance round.

Grace Hazard Conkling

The chuckle of the nightingale
Is like this elfin wood.
Even as his gleaming trills assail
The spirit's solitude,
These leaves of light, these branches frail
Are music's very mood.

The song of these fantastic trees,
The plumes of frost they wear,
Are for the poet's whim who sees
Through a deceptive air,
And has an ear for melodies
When never a sound is there.

Amelia Josephine Burr

Amelia Josephine Burr was born in New York City in 1878. She was educated at Hunter College and has made her home in Englewood, New Jersey.

A great range of interests has been the outstanding feature of her work. Too often she yields to her own facility, but there is decided vigor in many pages of *The Roadside Fire* (1912), *In Deep Places* (1914) and *Life and Living* (1916).

BATTLE-SONG OF FAILURE

We strain toward Heaven and lay hold on Hell;
With starward eyes we stumble in hard ways,
And to the moments when we see life well
Succeeds the blindness of bewildered days,—

Don Marquis

When baffled lips demanded speech,
    Speech trembled into birth—
(One day the lyric word shall reach
    From earth to laughing earth.)—

When man's dim eyes demanded light,
    The light he sought was born—
His wish, a Titan, scaled the height
    And flung him back the morn!

From deed to dream, from dream to deed,
    From daring hope to hope,
The restless wish, the instant need,
    Still lashed him up the slope!

. . . . .

I sing no governed firmament,
    Cold, ordered, regular—
I sing the stinging discontent
    That leaps from star to star!

John Erskine

John Erskine was born in New York City, October 5, 1879. He graduated from Columbia University, receiving his A.M. in 1901 and Ph.D. in 1903. He has taught English since 1903, first at Amherst College, and (beginning in 1916) at Columbia.

Although most of Erskine's works have been performed in the capacity of editor and essayist, he has written two volumes of excellent verse. *Actæon and Other Poems* (1906) is little more than an introduction to *The Shadowed Hour* (1917), which contains such keen verses as "Satan" and "Ash-Wednesday" in which philosophy and poetry are interknit.

John Erskine

DEDICATION

When imperturbable the gentle moon
Glides above war and onslaught through the night,
When the sun burns magnificent at noon
On hate contriving horror by its light,
When man, for whom the stars were and the skies,
Turns beast to rend his fellow, fang and hoof
Shall we not think, with what ironic eyes
Nature must look on us and stand aloof?
But not alone the sun, the moon, the stars,
Shining unharmed above man's folly move;
For us three beacons kindle one another
Which waver not with any kind of wars:
We love our children still, still them we love
Who gave us birth, and still we love each other.

James Branch Cabell

James Branch Cabell was born at Richmond, Virginia, April 14, 1879. He taught French and Greek for two years at William and Mary College (1896-7), worked in the pressroom of the Richmond *Times* (1898), was on the staff of the New York *Herald* (1899-1901) and began contributing to the magazines in 1902, writing over sixty short stories as well as scattered essays, translations and papers on historical and biographical subjects.

Although Cabell likes to describe himself as a genealogist, he is the author of some of the most exquisite prose in contemporary literature. But it is a prose that rises high above its own

beauty of style. In books like *The Certain Hour* (1916), *The Cream of the Jest* (1917), *Jurgen* (1919) and the poetry-crammed "comedy of appearances," *Figures of Earth* (1921), the composite Cabell hero emerges, triumphant in the midst of his defeats—the eternally disillusioned, eternally hopeful Jurgen-Charteris-Kennaston: a symbol of the human soul seeking some sort of finality, some assurance in a world of illimitable perplexities.

Though Cabell is best known as a novelist, his books are liberally dotted with original verses that do duty as chapter-headings, mottoes, tail-pieces, interpolated songs and epilogues. A complete volume of his verse, *From the Hidden Way* (1916), bore the subtitle "Being Seventy-Five Adaptations." It purported to be paraphrases from forgotten troubadours like Allesandro de Medici, Antoine Riczi, Charles Garnier and half a dozen other obscure Parnassians. Cabell even quoted the first lines of each of their poems in the original Latin, French or Provençal. Even after the hoax was exposed, it was difficult for most readers to believe that the entire collection—names, references, first lines in the "original" and all—were the creation of Cabell, the masquerader.

In *From the Hidden Way,* the romancer has added another story to that gem-studded ivory tower in which Cabell lives and escapes the modern world. Whether he echoes the mediæval ballata or the more modern rondeau, roundel and sonnet, his is an artifice solidly erected upon art.

SEA-SCAPES

I lie and dream in the soft warm sand; and the thunder
and surge and the baffled roar
Of the sea's relentless and vain endeavors are a pleasant
lullaby, here on shore.

Since a little hillock screens yonder ageless, tenacious
battlings (which shatter, and pass
In foam and spume), I appraise, half-nodding, much sand
and sky and gaunt nodding grass.

And I am content to lie and dream; and I am too drowsy
to rise, and see
If it be worth breasting—that ocean yonder, which a
little hillock hides from me.

ONE END OF LOVE

"It is long since we met," she said.
I answered, "Yes."

She is not fair,
But very old now, and no gold
Gleams in that scant gray withered hair
Where once much gold was: and, I think,
Not easily might one bring tears
Into her eyes, which have become
Like dusty glass.

"'Tis thirty years,"
I said. "And then the war came on
Apace, and our young King had need
Of men to serve him oversea
Against the heathen. For their greed,
Puffed up at Tunis, troubles him——"

She said: "This week my son is gone
To him at Paris with his men."
And then: "You never married, John?"

I answered, "No." And so we sate
Musing a while.

Then with his guests
Came Robert; and his thin voice broke
Upon my dream, with the old jests,
No food for laughter now: and swore
We must be friends now that our feud
Was overpast.

"We are grown old—
Eh, John?" he said. "And, by the Rood!
'Tis time we were at peace with God
Who are not long for this world."

"Yea,"
I answered; "we are old." And then,
Remembering that April day
At Calais, and that hawthorn field
Wherein we fought long since, I said:
"We are friends now."

And she sate by,
Scarce heeding. Thus the evening sped.

And we ride homeward now, and I
Ride moodily; my palfrey jogs
Along a rock-strewn way the moon
Lights up for us; yonder the bogs

James Branch Cabell

Are curdled with thin ice; the trees
Are naked; from the barren wold
The wind comes like a blade aslant
Across a world grown very old.

Vachel Lindsay

(Nicholas) Vachel Lindsay was born in the house where he still lives in Springfield, Illinois, November 10, 1879. His home is next door to the Executive mansion of the State of Illinois; from the window where Lindsay does most of his writing, he saw many Governors come and go, including the martyred John P. Altgeld, whom he has celebrated in one of his finest poems. He graduated from the Springfield High School, attended Hiram College (1897-1900), studied at the Art Institute at Chicago (1900-3) and at the New York School of Art (1904). After two years of lecturing and settlement work, he took the first of his long tramps, walking through Florida, Georgia and the Carolinas, preaching "the gospel of beauty," and formulating his unique plans for a communal art. (See Preface.) During the following five years, Lindsay made several of these trips, travelling as a combination missionary and minstrel. Like a true revivalist, he attempted to wake in the people he met, a response to beauty; like Tommy Tucker, he sang, recited and chanted for his supper, distributing a little pamphlet entitled "Rhymes to be Traded for Bread."

Lindsay began to create more poetry to reach the public—all of his verse being written in his rôle of apostle. He was, primarily, a rhyming John the Baptist singing to convert the heathen, to stimulate and encourage the half-hearted dreams that hide and are lost in our sordid villages and townships. But the great audiences he was endeavoring to reach did not hear him, even though his collection *General Booth Enters Into Heaven* (1913) struck many a loud and racy note.

Lindsay broadened his effects, developed the chant and, the

following year, published his *The Congo and Other Poems* (1914), an infectious blend of rhymes, ragtime and religion. In the title-poem and, in a lesser degree, the three companion chants, Lindsay struck his most powerful—and most popular—vein. They gave people (particularly when intoned aloud) that primitive joy in syncopated sound that is at the very base of song. In these experiments in breaking down the barriers between poetry and music, Lindsay (obviously infected by the echolalia of Poe's "Bells") tried to create what he called a "Higher Vaudeville" imagination, carrying the form back to the old Greek precedent where every line was half-spoken, half-sung.

Lindsay's innovation succeeded at once. The novelty, the speed, the clatter forced the attention of people who had never paid the slightest heed to the poet's quieter verses. Men heard the *sounds* of energetic America in these lines even when they were deaf to its spirit. They failed to see that, beneath the noise of "The Kallyope Yell" and "The Sante Fé Trail," Lindsay was partly an admirer, partly an ironical critic of the shrieking energy of these states. By his effort to win the enemy over, Lindsay had persuaded the proverbially tired business man to listen at last. But, in overstressing the vaudeville features, there arose the danger of Lindsay the poet being lost in Lindsay the entertainer. The sympathetic and colorful studies of negro spirits and psychology (seen at their best in "The Congo," "John Brown" and "Simon Legree") degenerated into the crude buffooneries of "The Daniel Jazz" and "The Blacksmith's Serenade."

But Lindsay's earnestness, keyed up by an exuberant fancy, saved him. *The Chinese Nightingale* (1917) begins with one of the most whimsical pieces Lindsay has ever devised. And if the subsequent *The Golden Whales of California* (1920) is less distinctive, it is principally because the author has written too much and too speedily to be self-critical. It is his peculiar appraisal of loveliness, the rollicking high spirits joined to a

stubborn evangelism, that makes Lindsay so representative a product of his environment.

Besides his original poetry, Lindsay has embodied his experiences and meditations on the road in two prose volumes, *A Handy Guide for Beggars* (1916) and *Adventures While Preaching the Gospel of Beauty* (1914), as well as a prophetic study of the "silent drama," *The Art of the Moving Picture* (1915).

THE EAGLE THAT IS FORGOTTEN [1]

[*John P. Altgeld. Born December 30, 1847; died March 12, 1902*]

Sleep softly . . . eagle forgotten . . . under the stone,
Time has its way with you there, and the clay has its own.
"We have buried him now," thought your foes, and in secret rejoiced.
They made a brave show of their mourning, their hatred unvoiced.
They had snarled at you, barked at you, foamed at you, day after day,
Now you were ended. They praised you, . . . and laid you away.

The others that mourned you in silence and terror and truth,
The widow bereft of her pittance, the boy without youth,

[1] Reprinted by permission of the publishers, The Macmillan Company, from *General William Booth Enters into Heaven and Other Poems* by Vachel Lindsay.

The mocked and the scorned and the wounded, the lame
and the poor
That should have remembered forever, . . . remember
no more.

Where are those lovers of yours, on what name do they
call
The lost, that in armies wept over your funeral pall?
They call on the names of a hundred high-valiant ones,
A hundred white eagles have risen, the sons of your sons,
The zeal in their wings is a zeal that your dreaming
began,
The valor that wore out your soul in the service of man.

Sleep softly, . . . eagle forgotten, . . . under the stone,
Time has its way with you there, and the clay has its own.
Sleep on, O brave hearted, O wise man, that kindled
the flame—
To live in mankind is far more than to live in a name,
To live in mankind, far, far more . . . than to live
in a name.

Vachel Lindsay

THE CONGO[1]

(*A Study of the Negro Race*)

I. THEIR BASIC SAVAGERY

Fat black bucks in a wine-barrel room,
Barrel-house kings, with feet unstable,
Sagged and reeled and pounded on the table, *A deep rolling bass.*
Pounded on the table,
Beat an empty barrel with the handle of a broom,
Hard as they were able,
Boom, boom, BOOM,
With a silk umbrella and the handle of a broom,
Boomlay, boomlay, boomlay, BOOM.

THEN I had religion, THEN I had a vision.
I could not turn from their revel in derision.
THEN I SAW THE CONGO, CREEPING THROUGH THE BLACK, *More deliberate. Solemnly chanted.*
CUTTING THROUGH THE JUNGLE WITH A GOLDEN TRACK.

[1] Reprinted by permission of the publishers, The Macmillan Company, from *The Congo and Other Poems* by Vachel Lindsay.

Then along that riverbank
A thousand miles
Tattooed cannibals danced in files;
Then I heard the boom of the blood-lust song
And a thigh-bone beating on a tin-pan gong. *A rapidly piling climax of speed and racket.*
And "BLOOD" screamed the whistles and the fifes of the warriors,
"BLOOD" screamed the skull-faced, lean witch-doctors,
"Whirl ye the deadly voo-doo rattle,
Harry the uplands,
Steal all the cattle,
Rattle-rattle, rattle-rattle,
Bing!
Boomlay, boomlay, boomlay, BOOM,"
A roaring, epic, rag-time tune *With a philosophic pause.*
From the mouth of the Congo
To the Mountains of the Moon.
Death is an Elephant,
Torch-eyed and horrible, *Shrilly and with a heavily accented meter.*
Foam-flanked and terrible.
BOOM, steal the pygmies,
BOOM, kill the Arabs,
BOOM, kill the white men,
Hoo, Hoo, Hoo. *Like the wind in the chimney.*
Listen to the yell of Leopold's ghost
Burning in Hell for his hand-maimed host.

Hear how the demons chuckle and yell.
Cutting his hands off, down in Hell.
Listen to the creepy proclamation,
Blown through the lairs of the forest-
nation,
Blown past the white-ants' hill of clay,
Blown past the marsh where the butter-
flies play:—
"Be careful what you do,
Or Mumbo-Jumbo, God of the Congo,
And all of the other
Gods of the Congo,
Mumbo-Jumbo will hoo-doo you,
Mumbo-Jumbo will hoo-doo you,
Mumbo-Jumbo will hoo-doo you."

All the o sounds very golden. Heavy accents very heavy. Light accents very light. Last line whispered.

II. Their Irrepressible High Spirits

Wild crap-shooters with a whoop and a call
Danced the juba in their gambling-hall
And laughed fit to kill, and shook the town,
And guyed the policemen and laughed
them down
With a boomlay, boomlay, boomlay,
Boom. . . .
THEN I SAW THE CONGO, CREEPING
THROUGH THE BLACK,
CUTTING THROUGH THE JUNGLE WITH
A GOLDEN TRACK.

Rather shill and high.

Read exactly as in first section.

A negro fairyland swung into view, *Lay emphasis on the delicate ideas. Keep as light-footed as possible.*
A minstrel river
Where dreams come true.
The ebony palace soared on high
Through the blossoming trees to the evening sky.
The inlaid porches and casements shone
With gold and ivory and elephant-bone.
And the black crowd laughed till their sides were sore
At the baboon butler in the agate door,
And the well-known tunes of the parrot band
That trilled on the bushes of that magic-land.

A troupe of skull-faced witch-men came *With pomposity.*
Through the agate doorway in suits of flame,
Yea, long-tailed coats with a gold-leaf crust
And hats that were covered with diamond-dust.
And the crowd in the court gave a whoop and a call
And danced the juba from wall to wall.
But the witch-men suddenly stilled the throng
With a stern cold glare, and a stern old song:— *With a great deliberation and ghostliness.*

"Mumbo-Jumbo will hoo-doo you." . . .
Just then from the doorway, as fat as shotes,
Came the cake-walk princes in their long red coats,
Shoes with a patent leather shine,
And tall silk hats that were red as wine.
And they pranced with their butterfly partners there,
Coal-black maidens with pearls in their hair,
Knee-skirts trimmed with the jessamine sweet,
And bells on their ankles and little black feet.
And the couples railed at the chant and the frown
Of the witch-men lean, and laughed them down.
(O rare was the revel, and well worth while
That made those glowering witch-men smile.)

With overwhelming assurance, good cheer, and pomp.

With growing speed and sharply marked dance-rhythm.

The cake-walk royalty then began
To walk for a cake that was tall as a man
To the tune of "Boomlay, boomlay, BOOM,"

While the witch-men laughed, with a sinister air,
And sang with the scalawags prancing there:—
"Walk with care, walk with care,
Or Mumbo-Jumbo, God of the Congo,
And all of the other
Gods of the Congo,
Mumbo-Jumbo will hoo-doo you.
Beware, beware, walk with care,
Boomlay, boomlay, boomlay, boom.
Boomlay, boomlay, boomlay, boom,
Boomlay, boomlay, boomlay, boom,
Boomlay, boomlay, boomlay,
BOOM."
Oh rare was the revel, and well worth while
That made those glowering witch-men smile.

With a touch of negro dialect, and as rapidly as possible toward the end.

Slow philosophic calm.

III. THE HOPE OF THEIR RELIGION

A good old negro in the slums of the town
Preached at a sister for her velvet gown.
Howled at a brother for his low-down ways,
His prowling, guzzling, sneak-thief days.
Beat on the Bible till he wore it out,
Starting the jubilee revival shout.

Heavy bass. With a literal imitation of camp-meeting racket, and trance.

And some had visions, as they stood on chairs,
And sang of Jacob, and the golden stairs.
And they all repented, a thousand strong,
From their stupor and savagery and sin and wrong
And slammed their hymn books till they shook the room
With "Glory, glory, glory,"
And "Boom, boom, BOOM."

THEN I SAW THE CONGO, CREEPING THROUGH THE BLACK, *Exactly as in the first section.*
CUTTING THROUGH THE JUNGLE WITH A GOLDEN TRACK.
And the gray sky opened like a new-rent veil
And showed the apostles with their coats of mail.
In bright white steel they were seated round
And their fire-eyes watched where the Congo wound.
And the twelve apostles, from their thrones on high,
Thrilled all the forest with their heavenly cry:—
"Mumbo-Jumbo will die in the jungle; *Sung to the tune of "Hark, ten thousand harps and voices."*
Never again will he hoo-doo you,
Never again will he hoo-doo you."

Then along that river, a thousand miles, *With growing deliberation and joy.*
The vine-snared trees fell down in files.
Pioneer angels cleared the way
For a Congo paradise, for babes at play,
For sacred capitals, for temples clean.
Gone were the skull-faced witch-men lean.
There, where the wild ghost-gods had wailed *In a rather high key — as delicately as possible.*
A million boats of the angels sailed
With oars of silver, and prows of blue
And silken pennants that the sun shone through.
'Twas a land transfigured, 'twas a new creation.
Oh, a singing wind swept the negro nation;
And on through the backwoods clearing flew:—
" Mumbo-Jumbo is dead in the jungle. *To the tune of " Hark, ten thousand harps and voices."*
Never again will he hoo-doo you.
Never again will he hoo-doo you."

Redeemed were the forests, the beasts and the men,
And only the vulture dared again
By the far, lone mountains of the moon
To cry, in the silence, the Congo tune:—
" Mumbo-Jumbo will hoo-doo you. *Dying off into a penetrating, terrified whisper.*
Mumbo-Jumbo will hoo-doo you,
Mumbo . . . Jumbo . . . will . . . hoo-doo . . . you."

TO A GOLDEN HAIRED GIRL IN A LOUISIANA TOWN

You are a sunrise,
If a star should rise instead of the sun.
You are a moonrise,
If a star should come in the place of the moon.
You are the Spring,
If a face should bloom instead of an apple-bough.
You are my love,
If your heart is as kind
As your young eyes now.

THE TRAVELLER

The moon's a devil jester
Who makes himself too free.
The rascal is not always
Where he appears to be.
Sometimes he is in my heart—
Sometimes he is in the sea;
Then tides are in my heart,
And tides are in the sea.

O traveller, abiding not
Where he pretends to be!

A NEGRO SERMON:—SIMON LEGREE

Legree's big house was white and green.
His cotton-fields were the best to be seen.
He had strong horses and opulent cattle,
And bloodhounds bold, with chains that would rattle.
His garret was full of curious things:
Books of magic, bags of gold,
And rabbits' feet on long twine strings.
But he went down to the Devil.

Legree, he sported a brass-buttoned coat,
A snake-skin necktie, a blood-red shirt.
Legree, he had a beard like a goat,
And a thick hairy neck, and eyes like dirt.
His puffed-out cheeks were fish-belly white,
He had great long teeth, and an appetite.
He ate raw meat, 'most every meal,
And rolled his eyes till the cat would squeal.
His fist was an enormous size
To mash poor niggers that told him lies:
He was surely a witch-man in disguise.
But he went down to the Devil.

He wore hip-boots, and would wade all day
To capture his slaves that had fled away.
But he went down to the Devil.
He beat poor Uncle Tom to death
Who prayed for Legree with his last breath.

Then Uncle Tom to Eva flew,
To the high sanctoriums bright and new;
And Simon Legree stared up beneath,
And cracked his heels, and ground his teeth:
And went down to the Devil.

He crossed the yard in the storm and gloom;
He went into his grand front room.
He said, "I killed him, and I don't care."
He kicked a hound, he gave a swear;
He tightened his belt, he took a lamp,
Went down cellar to the webs and damp.
There in the middle of the mouldy floor
He heaved up a slab; he found a door—
And went down to the Devil.

His lamp blew out, but his eyes burned bright.
Simon Legree stepped down all night—
Down, down to the Devil.
Simon Legree he reached the place,
He saw one half of the human race,
He saw the Devil on a wide green throne,
Gnawing the meat from a big ham-bone,
And he said to Mister Devil:

"I see that you have much to eat—
A red ham-bone is surely sweet.
I see that you have lion's feet;
I see your frame is fat and fine,
I see you drink your poison wine—
Blood and burning turpentine."

And the Devil said to Simon Legree:
"I like your style, so wicked and free.
Come sit and share my throne with me,
And let us bark and revel."
And there they sit and gnash their teeth,
And each one wears a hop-vine wreath.
They are matching pennies and shooting craps,
They are playing poker and taking naps.
And old Legree is fat and fine:
He eats the fire, he drinks the wine—
Blood and burning turpentine—
Down, down with the Devil;
Down, down with the Devil;
Down, down with the Devil.

ABRAHAM LINCOLN WALKS AT MIDNIGHT * [1]

(In Springfield, Illinois)

It is portentous, and a thing of state
That here at midnight, in our little town
A mourning figure walks, and will not rest,
Near the old court-house pacing up and down,

* See pages 51, 114, 123, 245, 252, 323.

[1] Reprinted by permission of the publishers, The Macmillan Company, from *The Chinese Nightingale and Other Poems* by Vachel Lindsay.

Or by his homestead, or in shadowed yards
He lingers where his children used to play,
Or through the market, on the well-worn stones
He stalks until the dawn-stars burn away.

A bronzed, lank man! His suit of ancient black,
A famous high top-hat and plain worn shawl
Make him the quaint great figure that men love,
The prairie-lawyer, master of us all.

He cannot sleep upon his hillside now.
He is among us:—as in times before!
And we who toss and lie awake for long,
Breathe deep, and start, to see him pass the door.

His head is bowed. He thinks of men and kings.
Yea, when the sick world cries, how can he sleep?
Too many peasants fight, they know not why;
Too many homesteads in black terror weep.

The sins of all the war-lords burn his heart.
He sees the dreadnaughts scouring every main.
He carries on his shawl-wrapped shoulders now
The bitterness, the folly and the pain.

He cannot rest until a spirit-dawn
Shall come;—the shining hope of Europe free:
A league of sober folk, the Workers' Earth,
Bringing long peace to Cornland, Alp and Sea.

Vachel Lindsay

It breaks his heart that things must murder still,
That all his hours of travail here for men
Seem yet in vain. And who will bring white peace
That he may sleep upon his hill again?

Edwin Meade Robinson

Edwin Meade Robinson (no relation to Edwin Arlington Robinson) was born November 1, 1879, at Lima, Indiana. He engaged in newspaper work when he was scarcely out of his 'teens, joining the staff of the Indianapolis *Sentinel* in 1901. He began writing a daily poem in 1904 and, for years, has conducted a column of prose and verse in the Cleveland *Plain Dealer.*

Mere Melodies (1918) is a collection of Robinson's light and sentimental verse, an uneven collection. *Piping and Panning* (1920) is a much fresher and far more vigorous assembling of this versifier's humorous and burlesque idioms. One of our most adroit technicians, he is especially happy in interior rhyming; a poem like "Halcyon Days" contains, beside the end-rhymes, rhymes hidden within the lines and others running over from line to line.

HOW HE TURNED OUT

When he was young, his parents saw (as parents by the
million see)
That Rollo had an intellect of quite unequaled brilliancy;
They started in his training from the hour of his nativity,
And carefully they cultivated every bright proclivity.

Edwin Meade Robinson

At eight, he ate up authors like a literary cannibal,
At nine he mastered Latin as the Latins mastered Hannibal;
At ten he knew astronomy and differential calculus,
And at eleven could dissect the tiniest animalculus.

At twelve, he learned orthometry, and started in to master all
The different kinds of poetry, the lyric and the pastoral,
The epic and dramatic, the descriptive and didactical,
With lessons theoretical and exercises practical.

Music he learned—the old and sweet, the up-to-date and hideous;
He painted like Apelles and he modeled like a Phidias;
In language he was polyglot, in rhetoric Johnsonian,
In eloquence Websterian, in diction Ciceronian.

At last, with learning that would set an ordinary head agog,
His education far outshone his most proficient pedagog;
And so he entered life, with all his lore to lift the lid for him—
And what do you imagine that his erudition did for him?

Alas! I fear the truth will shock you, rather than amuse you all—
To those who've read this sort of verse, the sequel is unusual.
This man (it's hard on humor, for it breaks the well known laws of it!)
Was happier for his learning, and a great success because of it!

Edwin Meade Robinson

"HALCYON DAYS"

Ere yet the giants of modern science had gone a-slumming
in smelly slums,
And through the Ghettos and lazarettos had put in
plumbing (and pulled out plums!)
When wily wizards in inky vizards employed their talents
at homicide,
And poisoned goblets for faithless squablets by knightly
gallants were justified;
When maids were fairest, and baths were rarest, and
thaumaturgy was wrought by dames,
When courts were rotten and faith forgotten, and none
but clergy could write their names—

When he who flouted the Church, or doubted, would find
his neck fast in hempen ruff,
And saint and sinner thought eggs for dinner and beer
for breakfast the proper stuff;
When men were scary of witch and fairy, of haunted
castle, of spook and elf,
When every mixer of cough-elixir was thought a vassal
of Nick himself;
When income taxes and prophylaxis and Comic Sections
were yet unborn,
When Leagues of Nations and Spring Vacations and
Fall Elections were held in scorn—

When all brave fellows would fight duellos with sword
and dagger, with lance and mace,
When good men guzzled until, clean fuzzled, they'd reel
and stagger about the place;

Edwin Meade Robinson

When pious journeys and jousts and tourneys brought
high adventure and secret tryst,
When knives were many, but forks not any—'twas fist
to trencher, and mouth to fist!—
Oh, men had chances for true romances, for fame and
glory, and knightly acts . . .
(And childish quarrels and beastly morals, if song and
story would stick to facts!)

Franklin P. Adams

Franklin P. Adams, better known to the readers of his column as F. P. A., was born at Chicago, Illinois, November 15, 1881. He attended the University of Michigan (1899-1900) and, after a brief career as an insurance agent, plunged into journalism. Adams had already been an ardent contributor to B. L. T.'s "A Line o' Type or Two" and, in 1903, he began conducting a column of his own on the Chicago *Journal.* Late in 1904, he came to New York, running his "Always in Good Humor" section on *The Evening Mail* until 1914, when he started "The Conning Tower" for the New York *Tribune.*

Adams is the author of five volumes of a light verse that is not only skilful but energetic as well as facile. *Tobogganing on Parnassus* (1909), *In Other Words* (1912), *By and Large* (1914), *Weights and Measures* (1917) and *Something Else Again* (1920) reveal a spirit which is essentially one of mockery. One admires these books for their impudent—and faithful—paraphrases of Horace and Propertius, for their last-line twists *à la* O. Henry, with whom Adams wrote a comic opera that never reached New York), for the ease with which their author springs his surprises and, perhaps most of all, for the healthy satire that runs sharply through all of his colloquial and dexterous lines.

Franklin P. Adams

WAR AND PEACE

"This war is a terrible thing," he said,
"With its countless numbers of needless dead;
A futile warfare it seems to me,
Fought for no principle I can see.
Alas, that thousands of hearts should bleed
For naught but a tyrant's boundless greed!"

. . . . . .

Said the wholesale grocer, in righteous mood,
As he went to adulterate salable food.

Spake as follows the merchant king:
"Isn't this war a disgraceful thing?
Heartless, cruel, and useless, too;
It doesn't seem that it *can* be true.
Think of the misery, want and fear!
We ought to be grateful we've no war here."

. . . . . .

"Six a week"—to a girl—"That's flat!
I can get a thousand to work for that."

THE RICH MAN

The rich man has his motor-car,
His country and his town estate.
He smokes a fifty-cent cigar
And jeers at Fate.

Franklin P. Adams

He frivols through the livelong day,
He knows not Poverty, her pinch.
His lot seems light, his heart seems gay;
He has a cinch.

Yet though my lamp burns low and dim,
Though I must slave for livelihood—
Think you that I would change with him?
You bet I would!

THOSE TWO BOYS

When Bill was a lad he was terribly bad.
He worried his parents a lot;
He'd lie and he'd swear and pull little girls' hair;
His boyhood was naught but a blot.

At play and in school he would fracture each rule—
In mischief from autumn to spring;
And the villagers knew when to manhood he grew
He would never amount to a thing.

When Jim was a child he was not very wild;
He was known as a good little boy;
He was honest and bright and the teacher's delight—
To his mother and father a joy.

All the neighbors were sure that his virtue'd endure,
That his life would be free of a spot;
They were certain that Jim had a great head on him
And that Jim would amount to a lot.

Franklin P. Adams

And Jim grew to manhood and honor and fame
And bears a good name;
While Bill is shut up in a dark prison cell—
You never can tell.

John G. Neihardt

John Gneisenau Neihardt was born at Sharpsburg, Illinois, January 8, 1881. He completed a scientific course at Nebraska Normal College in 1897 and lived among the Omaha Indians for six years (1901-7), studying their customs, characteristics and legends.

Although he had already published two books, *A Bundle of Myrrh* (1908) was his first volume to attract notice. It was full of spirit, enthusiasm and an insistent virility—qualities which were extended (and overemphasized) in *Man-Song* (1909). Neihardt found a richer note and a new restraint in *The Stranger at the Gate* (1911); the best of the lyrics from these three volumes appearing in *The Quest* (1916).

Neihardt meanwhile had been going deeper into folk-lore, the results of which appeared in *The Song of Hugh Glass* (1915) and *The Song of Three Friends* (1919). The latter, in 1920, divided the annual prize offered by the Poetry Society, halving the honors with Gladys Cromwell's *Poems.* These two of Neihardt's are detailed long poems, part of a projected epic series celebrating the winning of the West by the pioneers. What prevents both volumes from fulfilling the breadth at which they aim is the disparity between the author's story and his style; essentially racy narratives are recited in an archaic and incongruous speech. Yet, in spite of a false rhetoric and a locution that considers prairies and trappers in terms of "Ilion," "Iseult," "Clotho," the "dim far shore of Styx," Neihardt has achieved his effects with no little skill. Dramatic, stern, and conceived with a powerful dignity, his major works are American in feeling if not in execution.

John G. Neihardt

WHEN I AM DEAD

When I am dead and nervous hands have thrust
My body downward into careless dust;
I think the grave cannot suffice to hold
My spirit 'prisoned in the sunless mould!
Some subtle memory of you shall be
A resurrection of the life of me.
Yea, I shall be, because I love you so,
The speechless spirit of all things that grow.
You shall not touch a flower but it shall be
Like a caress upon the cheek of me.
I shall be patient in the common grass
That I may feel your footfall when you pass.
I shall be kind as rain and pure as dew,
A loving spirit 'round the life of you.
When your soft cheeks by perfumed winds are fanned,
'Twill be my kiss—and you will understand.
But when some sultry, storm-bleared sun has set,
I will be lightning if you dare forget!

CRY OF THE PEOPLE[1]

Tremble before thy chattels,
Lords of the scheme of things!
Fighters of all earth's battles,
Ours is the might of kings!

[1] Reprinted by permission of the publishers, The Macmillan Company, from *The Quest* by John G. Neihardt.

John G. Neihardt

Guided by seers and sages
The world's heart-beat for a drum,
Snapping the chains of ages,
Out of the night we come!

Lend us no ear that pities!
Offer no almoner's hand!
Alms for the builders of cities!
When will you understand?
Down with your pride of birth
And your golden gods of trade!
A man is worth to his mother, Earth,
All that a man has made!

We are the workers and makers.
We are no longer dumb!
Tremble, O Shirkers and Takers!
Sweeping the earth—we come!
Ranked in the world-wide dawn,
Marching into the day!
The night is gone and the sword is drawn
And the scabbard is thrown away!

LET ME LIVE OUT MY YEARS[1]

Let me live out my years in heat of blood!
Let me die drunken with the dreamer's wine!
Let me not see this soul-house built of mud
Go toppling to the dust—a vacant shrine.

[1] Reprinted by permission of the publishers, The Macmillan Company, from *The Quest* by John G. Neihardt.

John G. Neihardt

Let me go quickly, like a candle light
Snuffed out just at the heyday of its glow.
Give me high noon—and let it then be night!
Thus would I go.

And grant that when I face the grisly Thing,
My song may trumpet down the gray Perhaps.
Let me be as a tune-swept fiddlestring
That feels the Master Melody—and snaps!

Witter Bynner

Witter Bynner was born at Brooklyn, New York, August 10, 1881. He was graduated from Harvard in 1902 and has been assistant editor of various periodicals as well as adviser to publishers. Recently, he has spent much of his time lecturing on poetry and travelling in the Orient.

Young Harvard (1907), the first of Bynner's volumes, was, as the name implies, a celebration of his *alma mater*. *The New World* (1915) is a much riper and far more ambitious effort. In this extended poem, Bynner sought—almost too determinedly—to translate the ideals of democracy into verse. Neither of these volumes displays its author's gifts at their best, for Bynner is, first of all, a lyric poet. *Grenstone Poems* (1917) and *A Canticle of Pan* (1920) reveal a more natural singing voice. Bynner harmonizes in many keys; transposing, modulating and shifting from one tonality to another. This very ease is his chief defect, for Bynner's facility leads him not only to write too much but in too many different styles. Many of his poems seem like sounding-boards that echo the tones of every poet except the composer of them. Instead of a fusion of gifts we have, too often, a disintegration.

When Bynner is least dexterous he is most ingratiating.

Witter Bynner

When he does not try to sound the whole gamut of modern poetry from the lyrics of A. E. Housman to the attenuated epigrams of Ezra Pound, he can strike his own note with clarity and precision. Even in *The Beloved Stranger* (1919), where the borrowed accents of his *alter ego* are only too apparent, one is arrested by lines of musical charm and fluency.

Under the pseudonym "Emanuel Morgan," Bynner was co-author with Arthur Davison Ficke (writing under the name of "Anne Knish") of *Spectra* (1916). *Spectra* was a serious burlesque of some of the extreme manifestations of modern poetic tendencies—a remarkable hoax that deceived many of the radical propagandists as well as most of the conservative critics.

GRASS-TOPS

What bird are you in the grass-tops?
Your poise is enough of an answer,
With your wing-tips like up-curving fingers
Of the slow-moving hands of a dancer . . .

And what is so nameless as beauty,
Which poets, who give it a name,
Are only unnaming forever?—
Content, though it go, that it came.

VOICES

O there were lights and laughter
    And the motions to and fro
Of people as they enter
    And people as they go . . .

Witter Bynner

And there were many voices
Vying at the feast,
But most I remember
Yours—who spoke the least.

A FARMER REMEMBERS LINCOLN *[1]

"Lincoln?—
Well, I was in the old Second Maine,
The first regiment in Washington from the Pine Tree State.
Of course I didn't get the butt of the clip;
We was there for guardin' Washington—
We was all green.

"I ain't never ben to the theayter in my life—
I didn't know how to behave.
I ain't never ben since.
I can see as plain as my hat the box where he sat in
When he was shot.
I can tell you, sir, there was a panic
When we found our President was in the shape he was in!
Never saw a soldier in the world but what liked him.

"Yes, sir. His looks was kind o' hard to forget.
He was a spare man,
An old farmer.

* See pages 51, 114, 123, 232, 252, 323.

[1] Reprinted by permission from *Grenstone Poems* by Witter Bynner. Copyright, 1917, by Frederick A. Stokes Company.

Everything was all right, you know,
But he wasn't a smooth-appearin' man at all—
Not in no ways;
Thin-faced, long-necked,
And a swellin' kind of a thick lip like.

"And he was a jolly old fellow—always cheerful:
He wasn't so high but the boys could talk to him their
own ways.
While I was servin' at the Hospital
He'd come in and say, 'You look nice in here.'
Praise us up, you know.
And he'd bend over and talk to the boys—
And he'd talk so good to 'em—so close—
That's why I call him a farmer.
I don't mean that everything about him wasn't all right,
you understand.
It's just—well, I was a farmer—
And he was my neighbor, anybody's neighbor.
I guess even you young folks would 'a' liked him."

TRAIN-MATES*

Outside have Shasta, snowy height on height,
A glory: but a negligible sight.
For you had often seen a mountain-peak
But not my paper. So we came to speak . . .

*Reprinted by permission from *Grenstone Poems* by Witter Bynner. Copyright, 1917, by Frederick A. Stokes Company.

Witter Bynner

A smoke, a smile,—a good way to commence
The comfortable exchange of difference!
You a young engineer, five feet eleven,
Forty-five chest, with football in your heaven,
Liking a road-bed newly built and clean,
Your fingers hot to cut away the green
Of brush and flowers that bring beside a track
The kind of beauty steel lines ought to lack,—
And I a poet, wistful of my betters,
Reading George Meredith's high-hearted letters,
Joining betweenwhile in the mingled speech
Of a drummer, circus-man, and parson, each
Absorbing to himself—as I to me
And you to you—a glad identity!

After a time, when others went away,
A curious kinship made us choose to stay,
Which I could tell you now; but at the time
You thought of baseball teams and I of rhyme,
Until we found that we were college men
And smoked more easily and smiled again;
And I from Cambridge cried, the poet still:
"I know your fine Greek theatre on the hill
At Berkeley!" With your happy Grecian head
Upraised, "I never saw the place," you said—
"Once I was free of class, I always went
Out to the field."

Young engineer, you meant
As fair a tribute to the better part
As ever I did. Beauty of the heart

Witter Bynner

Is evident in temples. But it breathes
Alive where athletes quicken curly wreaths,
Which are the lovelier because they die.
You are a poet quite as much as I,
Though differences appear in what we do,
And I an athlete quite as much as you.
Because you half-surmise my quarter-mile
And I your quatrain, we could greet and smile.
Who knows but we shall look again and find
The circus-man and drummer, not behind
But leading in our visible estate—
As discus-thrower and as laureate?

James Oppenheim

James Oppenheim was born at St. Paul, Minnesota, May 24, 1882. Two years later his family moved to New York City, where he has lived ever since. After a public school education, he took special courses at Columbia University (1901-3) and engaged in settlement work, acting in the capacity of assistant head worker of the Hudson Guild Settlement, and superintendent of the Hebrew Technical School for Girls (1904-7). His studies and experiences on the lower East Side of New York furnished the material for his first, and most popular, book of short stories, *Doctor Rast* (1909).

Oppenheim's initial venture as a poet, *Monday Morning and Other Poems* (1909), was a tentative collection; half imitative, half experimental. In spite of its obvious indebtedness to Whitman, most of the verses are in formal meters and regular (though ragged) rhyme. Beauty is sought but seldom captured here; the message is coughed out between bursts of eloquence and fits of stammering.

James Oppenheim

With *Songs for the New Age* (1914) Oppenheim became his own liberator. The stammering has gone, the uncouth dissonances have resolved. One listens to a speech that, echoing the Whitmanic sonority, develops a music that is strangely Biblical and yet local. It is the expression of an ancient people reacting to modernity, of a race in solution. (See Preface.) This volume, like all of Oppenheim's subsequent work, is analysis in terms of poetry; a slow searching beneath the musical surface that attempts to diagnose the twisted soul of man and the twisted times he lives in. The old Isaiah note, with a new introspection, rises out of such poems as "The Slave," "We Dead," "Tasting the Earth"; the music and imagery of the Psalms are heard in "The Flocks," "The Tree" and "The Runner in the Skies."

War and Laughter (1916) holds much of its predecessor's exaltation and an almost ecstatic discontent. The Semitic blend of delight and disillusion—that quality which hates the world for its shams and hypocrisies and loves it in spite of them—is revealed in "Greed," in the ironic "Report on the Planet Earth" and the brightly affirmative "Laughter."

The Book of Self (1917) is less notable, an imperfect fusion. Oppenheim's preoccupation with analytical psychology mars the effect of the long passages which, in themselves, contain flashes of clairvoyance. *The Solitary* (1919) is a great stride forward; its major section, a long symbolic poem called "The Sea," breathes the same note that was the burden of the earlier books—"We are flesh on the way to godhood"—with greater strength and still greater control.

Besides his poetry, Oppenheim has published several volumes of short stories, four novels, and two poetic plays. During 1916-17 he was editor of that promising but short-lived magazine, *The Seven Arts.*

James Oppenheim

THE RUNNER IN THE SKIES

Who is the runner in the skies,
With her blowing scarf of stars,
And our Earth and sun hovering like bees about her
blossoming heart?
Her feet are on the winds, where space is deep,
Her eyes are nebulous and veiled;
She hurries through the night to a far lover . . .

THE SLAVE

They set the slave free, striking off his chains . . .
Then he was as much of a slave as ever.

He was still chained to servility,
He was still manacled to indolence and sloth,
He was still bound by fear and superstition,
By ignorance, suspicion, and savagery . . .
His slavery was not in the chains,
But in himself. . . .

They can only set free men free . . .
And there is no need of that:
Free men set themselves free.

James Oppenheim

TASTING THE EARTH

In a dark hour, tasting the Earth.

As I lay on my couch in the muffled night, and the rain
lashed my window,
And my forsaken heart would give me no rest, no pause
and no peace,
Though I turned my face far from the wailing of my
bereavement. . . .
Then I said: I will eat of this sorrow to its last shred,
I will take it unto me utterly,
I will see if I be not strong enough to contain it. . . .
What do I fear? Discomfort?
How can it hurt me, this bitterness?

The miracle, then!
Turning toward it, and giving up to it,
I found it deeper than my own self. . . .
O dark great mother-globe so close beneath me . . .
It was she with her inexhaustible grief,
Ages of blood-drenched jungles, and the smoking of
craters, and the roar of tempests,
And moan of the forsaken seas,
It was she with the hills beginning to walk in the shapes
of the dark-hearted animals,
It was she risen, dashing away tears and praying to dumb
skies, in the pomp-crumbling tragedy of man . . .
It was she, container of all griefs, and the buried dust
of broken hearts,

Cry of the christs and the lovers and the child-stripped
mothers,
And ambition gone down to defeat, and the battle over-
borne,
And the dreams that have no waking. . . .

My heart became her ancient heart:
On the food of the strong I fed, on dark strange life
itself:
Wisdom-giving and sombre with the unremitting love
of ages. . . .

There was dank soil in my mouth,
And bitter sea on my lips,
In a dark hour, tasting the Earth.

THE LINCOLN CHILD *

Clearing in the forest,
In the wild Kentucky forest,
And the stars, wintry stars strewn above!
O Night that is the starriest
Since Earth began to roll—
For a Soul
Is born out of Love!
Mother love, father love, love of Eternal God—
Stars have pushed aside to let him through—
Through heaven's sun-sown deeps
One sparkling ray of God

* See pages 51, 114, 123, 232, 245, 323.

Strikes the clod—
(And while an angel-host through wood and clearing
sweeps!)
Born in the wild
The Child—
Naked, ruddy, new,
Wakes with the piteous human cry and at the
mother-heart sleeps.

To the mother wild berries and honey,
To the father awe without end,
To the child a swaddling of flannel—
And a dawn rolls sharp and sunny
And the skies of winter bend
To see the first sweet word penned
In the godliest human annal.

Frail Mother of the Wilderness—
How strange the world shines in
And the cabin becomes chapel
And the baby lies secure—
Sweet Mother of the Wilderness,
New worlds for you begin,
You have tasted of the apple
That giveth wisdom sure. . . .

Soon in the wide wilderness,
On a branch blown over a creek,
Up a trail of the wild coon,
In a lair of the wild bee,

James Oppenheim

The rugged boy by danger's storm
Learnt the speech the wild things speak.
Learnt the Earth's eternal rune
Of strife-engendered harmony—
Went to school where Life itself was master.
Went to church where Earth was minister—
And in Danger and Disaster
Felt his future manhood stir!

All about him the land,
Eastern cities, Western prairie,
Wild, immeasurable, grand;
But he was lost where blossomy boughs make airy
Bowers in the forest, and the sand
Makes brook-water a clear mirror that gives back
Green branches and trunks black
And clouds across the heavens lightly fanned.

Yet all the Future dreams, eager to waken,
Within that woodland soul—
And the bough of boy has only to be shaken
That the fruit drop whereby this Earth shall roll
A little nearer God than ever before.
Little recks he of war,
Of national millions waiting on his word—
Dreams still the Event unstirred
In the heart of the boy, the little babe of the wild—
But the years hurry and the tide of the sea
Of Time flows fast and ebbs, and he, even he,
Must leave the wilderness, the wood-haunts wild—

James Oppenheim

Soon shall the cyclone of Humanity
Tearing through Earth suck up this little child
And whirl him to the top, where he shall be
Riding the storm-column in the lightning-stroke,
Calm at the peak, while down below worlds rage,
And Earth goes out in blood and battle-smoke,
And leaves him with the sun—an epoch and an age!

And lo, as he grew ugly, gaunt,
And gnarled his way into a man,
What wisdom came to feed his want,
What worlds came near to let him scan!
And as he fathomed through and through
Our dark and sorry human scheme,
He knew what Shakespeare never knew,
What Dante never dared to dream—
That Men are one
Beneath the sun,
And before God are equal souls—
This truth was his,
And this it is
That round him such a glory rolls—
For not alone he knew it as a truth,
He made it of his blood, and of his brain—
He crowned it on the day when piteous Booth
Sent a whole land to weeping with world pain—
When a black cloud blotted the sun
And men stopped in the streets to sob,
To think Old Abe was dead.

Dead, and the day's work still undone,
Dead, and war's ruining heart athrob,
And earth with fields of carnage freshly spread
Millions died fighting,
But in this man we mourned
Those millions, and one other—
And the States to-day uniting,
North and South,
East and West,
Speak with a people's mouth
A rhapsody of rest
To him our beloved best,
Our big, gaunt, homely brother—
Our huge Atlantic coast-storm in a shawl,
Our cyclone in a smile—our President,
Who knew and loved us all
With love more eloquent
Than his own words—with Love that in real deed
was spent. . . .

Oh, to pour love through deeds—
To be as Lincoln was!—
That all the land might fill its daily needs
Glorified by a human Cause!
Then were America a vast World-Torch
Flaming a faith across the dying Earth,
Proclaiming from the Atlantic's rocky porch,
That a New World was struggling at the birth!

O living God, O Thou who living art,
And real, and near, draw, as at that babe's birth,

Into our souls and sanctify our Earth—
Let down Thy strength that we endure
Mighty and pure
As mothers and fathers of our own Lincoln-child—
Make us more wise, more true, more strong, more mild,
That we may day by day
Rear this wild blossom through its soft petals of clay;
That hour by hour
We may endow it with more human power
Than is our own—
That it may reach the goal
Our Lincoln long has shown!
O Child, flesh of our flesh, bone of our bone,
Soul torn from out our Soul!
May you be great, and pure, and beautiful—
A Soul to search this world
To be a father, brother, comrade, son,
A toiler powerful;
A man whose toil is done
One with God's Law above:
Work wrought through Love!

NIGHT NOTE

A little moon was restless in Eternity
And, shivering beneath the stars,
Dropped in the hiding arms of the western hill.

James Oppenheim

Night's discord ceased:
The visible universe moved in an endless rhythm:
The wheel of the heavens turned to the pulse of a cricket
in the grass.

Alice Corbin

Alice Corbin (Mrs. William Penhallow Henderson) was born in St. Louis, Missouri. She has been Associate Editor of *Poetry; A Magazine of Verse* since 1912, co-editing (with Harriet Monroe) *The New Poetry, An Anthology* (1917). Since 1914 she has lived in New Mexico.

The Spinning Woman of the Sky (1912) contains few hints of originality. It is cast in an entirely different key than Miss Corbin's later efforts. Her recent verses, many of them uncollected, are much richer; they reveal a close contact with primitive people and native folk-lore. Her southern and far western sketches are particularly colorful; a volume of New Mexico studies, *Red Earth* (1920), being full of noteworthy and sympathetic records.

ECHOES OF CHILDHOOD

(*A Folk-Medley*)

UNCLE JIM

Old Uncle Jim was as blind as a mole,
But he could fiddle Virginia Reels,
Till you felt the sap run out of your heels,
Till you knew the devil had got your soul—

Alice Corbin

Down the middle and swing yo' partners,
Up agin and salute her low,
Shake yo' foot an' keep a-goin',
Down the middle an' do-se-do!

Mind yo' manners an' doan git keerless,
Swing yo' lady and bow full low,
S'lute yo' partner an' turn yo' neighbor,
Gran'-right-an'-left, and aroun' you go!

* * *

Delphy

Delphy's breast was wide and deep,
A shelf to lay a child asleep,
Swing low, sweet chariot, swing low;
Rocking like a lifted boat
On lazy tropic seas afloat,
Swing low, sweet chariot, swing low.

Delphy, when my mother died,
Taught me wisdom, curbed my pride,
Swing low, sweet chariot, swing low;
And when she laid her body down,
It shone, a jewel, in His crown,
Swing low, sweet chariot, swing low.

* * *

(Underneath the southern moon
I was cradled to the tune
Of the banjo and the fiddle
And the plaintive negro croon.)

Mandy's Religion

I've got religion an' I don care
Who knows that God an' I are square,
I was carryin' home my mistis' wash
When God came an' spoke to me out'n de hush.

An' I th'ew de wash up inter de air,
An' I climbed a tree to de golden stair,
Ef it hadn't a been fur Mistah Wright
I'd had me stayed dere all de night!

* * *

(*Underneath the southern moon*
I was cradled in the tune
Of the banjo and the fiddle
And the plantation negro croon.)

Betsy's Boy

Betsy's boy could shuffle and clog,
Though you couldn't get him to saw a log,
Laziest boy about the place
Till he started to dance—and you saw his face!
It was all lit up like a mask of bronze
Set in a niche between temple gongs—
For he would dance and never stop
Till he fell on the floor like a spun-out top.
His feet hung loose from his supple waist,
He danced without stopping, he danced without haste.

Alice Corbin

Like Shiva the Hindu his feet were bound
In the rhythm of stars and of streams underground:

Banjo playin' and de sanded floor,
Fiddle cryin', always callin' more,
Can't help dancin' though de preacher says
Can't git to heaven doin' no sich ways,
Can't help dancin' though de devil stan's
With a pitch-fork waitin' in his brimstone han's;
Got—ter—keep—dancin',—can't—stop—now,
Got—ter—keep—dancin', I—doan—know—how . . .

Banjo playin' and de sanded floor,
Fiddle cryin', always callin' more,
People's faces lookin' scared an' white,
Hands a clappin' an' eyes starin' bright.
Can't help dancin' though de candle's dyin',
Can't help dancin' while de fiddle's cryin';
Got—ter—keep—dancin', can't—stop—now,
Got—ter—keep—dancin',—I—doan—know—how!

Louis Ridge

Louis Ridge was born in Dublin, Ireland, leaving there in infancy and spending her childhood in Sydney, Australia. After living some years in New Zealand, she returned to Australia to study art. In 1917, she came to the United States, supporting herself for three years by writing fiction for the popular magazines. She stopped this work only, as she says, 'because I found I would have to do as I pleased to survive as an artist.' For several years she earned her living in a variety of ways—as organizer for an educational movement, as advertisement writer, as illustrator, artist's model, factory-worker, etc. In 1918 *The New Republic* published her long poem *The Ghetto* and Miss Ridge, until then totally unknown, became the 'discovery' of the year.

Her volume *The Ghetto and Other Poems* 1918 contains one poem that is brilliant, several that are powerful and some that is mediocre. Her title-poem is its pinnacle in it Miss Ridge reaches strange heights. It is essentially a poem of the city, of its sudden brutalities, its sudden beauties. Swift figures shine from these lines like jacinth colors leaping out of darkness: images that are surprising but never strained glow with a contained clarity. In her other poems—especially in 'The Song of Iron,' 'Faces' and 'Frank Little at Calvary'—the same dignity is maintained, though with less magic.

Sun-Up 1920 is less integrated, more frankly experimental. But the same vibrancy and restrained power that distinguished her preceding work are manifest here. Her definitions are sensitive and subtle: she accomplishes the maximum in effects with a minimum of effort.

PASSAGES FROM "THE GHETTO"

Old Isaac as I open raises saddles.
He has forgotten how . . .
Time spins like a crazy dial in his brain.
And night by night

I see the love-gesture of his arm
In its green-greasy coat-sleeve
Circling the Book,
And the candles gleaming starkly
On the blotched-paper whiteness of his face,
Like a miswritten psalm . . .
Night by night
I hear his lifted praise,
Like a broken whinnying
Before the Lord's shut gate.

* * *

Lights go out
And the stark trunks of the factories
Melt into the drawn darkness,
Sheathing like a seamless garment.

And mothers take home their babies,
Waxen and delicately curled,
Like little potted flowers closed under the stars. . . .

Lights go out . . .
And colors rush together,
Fusing and floating away.
Pale worn gold like the settings of old jewels . . .
Mauve, exquisite, tremulous, and luminous purples,
And burning spires in aureoles of light
Like shimmering auras.

They are covering up the pushcarts . . .
Now all have gone save an old man with mirrors—
Little oval mirrors like tiny pools.
He shuffles up a darkened street
And the moon burnishes his mirrors till they shine like
phosphorus. . . .
The moon like a skull,
Staring out of eyeless sockets at the old men trundling
home the pushcarts.

* * *

A sallow dawn is in the sky
As I enter my little green room.
Without, the frail moon,
Worn to a silvery tissue,
Throws a faint glamour on the roofs,
And down the shadowy spires
Lights tip-toe out . . .
Softly as when lovers close street doors.

Out of the Battery
A little wind
Stirs idly—as an arm
Trails over a boat's side in dalliance—
Rippling the smooth dead surface of the heat,
And Hester street,
Like a forlorn woman over-borne
By many babies at her teats,
Turns on her trampled bed to meet the day.

NEW ORLEANS

Do you remember
Honey-melon moon
Dripping thick sweet light
Where Canal Street saunters off by herself
among quiet trees?
And the faint decayed patchouli—
Fragrance of New Orleans . . .
New Orleans,
Like a dead tube rose
Upheld in the warm air . . .
Miraculously whole.

WIND IN THE ALLEYS

Wind, rising in the alleys,
My spirit lifts in you like a banner
streaming free of hot walls.
You are full of unshaped dreams . . .
You are laden with beginnings . . .
There is hope in you . . . not sweet . . .
acrid as blood in the mouth.
Come into my tossing dust
Scattering the peace of old deaths,
Wind rising out of the alleys
Carrying stuff of flame.

Wallace Stevens

Wallace Stevens, of Hartford, Connecticut, is a poet whose peculiar quality is only exceeded by his reticence. He has scrupulously kept out of the public eye, has printed his poetry only at rare intervals and, though much of his work has been highly praised, has steadfastly refused to publish a volume.

Stevens's best work may be found in the three *Others* anthologies, edited by Alfred Kreymborg. Some of it is penetrative, more than a little is puzzling and all of it is provocative. In spite of what seems a weary disdain, Stevens is a more than skilful decorator and, like T. S. Eliot, combines irony and glamour in a highly original idiom.

PETER QUINCE AT THE CLAVIER

I

Just as my fingers on these keys
Make music, so the self-same sounds
On my spirit make a music, too.

Music is feeling, then, not sound;
And thus it is that what I feel,
Here in this room, desiring you,

Thinking of your blue-shadowed silk,
Is music. It is like the strain
Waked in the elders by Susanna:

Of a green evening, clear and warm,
She bathed in her still garden, while
The red-eyed elders, watching, felt

The basses of their beings throb
In witching chords, and their thin blood
Pulse pizzicati of Hosanna.

II

In the green water, clear and warm,
Susanna lay,
She searched
The touch of springs,
And found
Concealed imaginings.
She sighed,
For so much melody.

Upon the bank, she stood
In the cool
Of spent emotions.
She felt, among the leaves,
The dew
Of old devotions.

She walked upon the grass,
Still quavering.
The winds were like her maids,
On timid feet,
Fetching her woven scarves,
Yet wavering.

A breath upon her hand
Muted the night.
She turned—
A cymbal crashed,
And roaring horns.

III

Soon, with a noise like tambourines,
Came her attendant Byzantines.

They wondered why Susanna cried
Against the elders by her side;

And as they whispered, the refrain
Was like a willow swept by rain.

Anon, their lamps' uplifted flame
Revealed Susanna and her shame.

And then, the simpering Byzantines
Fled, with a noise like tambourines.

IV

Beauty is momentary in the mind—
The fitful tracing of a portal;
But in the flesh it is immortal.

The body dies; the body's beauty lives.
So evenings die, in their green going,
A wave, interminably flowing.
So gardens die, their meek breath scenting
The cowl of Winter, done repenting.
So maidens die, to the auroral
Celebration of a maiden's choral.

Susanna's music touched the bawdy strings
Of those white elders; but, escaping,

Wallace Stevens

Left only Death's ironic scraping.
Now, in its immortality, it plays
On the clear viol of her memory,
And makes a constant sacrament of praise.

Alfred Kreymborg

Alfred Kreymborg, one of the most original of the younger insurgents, was born in New York City, December 10, 1883. His education was spasmodic, his childhood being spent beneath the roar of the elevated trains. At ten he was an expert chess player, devoting practically all his time to a study of the game. Later, he became a bookkeeper for a few years, but from the ages of seventeen to twenty-five he supported himself by teaching chess and playing exhibition games. His passion, however, was not mathematics but music. He dreamed of extending the borders of poetry into the realms of tonic art, experimented with new systems of notation, technicalities of rhythm. At thirty, he began to turn to the theater as a medium; finding, in this way, fresh contacts that enriched and ripened his later work.

In 1914, he organized that group of radical poets which, half-deprecatingly, half-defiantly, called itself "Others." (He edited the three anthologies of their work published in 1916, 1917 and 1919.) Meanwhile, he had been working on a technique that was a fresh attempt to rid poetry of its too frequent wordiness and rhetorical non-essentials. *Mushrooms* (1916) was the first collection in this vein. Here Kreymborg continually sought for simplification, cutting away at his lines until they assumed an almost naked expression. Often he overdid his effects, attaining nothing more than a false ingenuousness, a sophisticated simplicity. Often, too, he failed to draw the line between what is innocently childlike and what is merely childish. One sees him frequently trying to strike

curious attitudes, tripping over several of his buffooneries and sprawling ingloriously.

But Kreymborg, for all harlequin gestures, can do something better than tumble and talk with his tongue in his cheek. An elfin fantasy and no little beauty of thought are his when he wants to use them. Surprising whimsicality and passages of bright color distinguish his *Plays for Poem-Mimes* (1918), in which the principles of modern art are applied to poetry and acting, as well as the more developed *Plays for Merry Andrews* (1920).

Kreymborg's most ambitious volume of poetry, *Blood of Things* (1920), is, for all the surface oddities, the work not only of an ardent experimenter but a serious thinker. Humor is in these pages, but it is humor lifted to a sort of exaltation. Here, in spite of what seems a persistence of occasional charlatanry, is a rich and sensitive imagination; a fancy that is as wild as it is quick-witted.

OLD MANUSCRIPT

The sky
is that beautiful old parchment
in which the sun
and the moon
keep their diary.
To read it all,
one must be a linguist
more learned than Father Wisdom;
and a visionary
more clairvoyant than Mother Dream.
But to feel it,
one must be an apostle:
one who is more than intimate

in having been, always,
the only confidant—
like the earth
or the sea.

DAWNS

I have come
from pride
all the way up to humility
This day-to-night.
The hill
was more terrible
than ever before.
This is the top;
there is the tall, slim tree.
It isn't bent; it doesn't lean;
It is only looking back.
At dawn,
under that tree,
still another me of mine
was buried.
Waiting for me to come again,
humorously solicitous
of what I bring next,
it looks down.

Alfred Kreymborg

HER EYES

Her eyes hold black whips—
  dart of a whip
  lashing, nay, flicking,
  nay, merely caressing
  the hide of a heart—
and a bronche tears through canyons—
  walls reverberating,
  sluggish streams
  shaken to rapids and torrents,
  storm destroying
  silence and solitude.
Her eyes throw black lariats—
  one for his head,
  one for his heels—
and the beast lies vanquished—
  walls still,
  streams still—
  except for a tarn,
  or is it a pool,
  or is it a whirlpool
  twitching with memory?

IMPROVISATION

Wind:
Why do you play
that long hesitant adagio
that enchants me,
  as

Alfred Kreymborg

to-night
Will it never end?
Or is it the beginning,
some prelude you seek?

Is it a tale you strum?
Yesterday, yesterday—
Have you no more for us?

Wind:
Play on.
There is nor hope
nor mutiny
in you.

Arthur Davison Ficke

Arthur Davison Ficke was born at Davenport, Iowa, November 10, 1883. He received his A.B. at Harvard (1904), studied for the law and was admitted to the bar in 1908. In 1919, after two years' service in France, he gave up his law practice and devoted himself to literature exclusively.

Ficke is the author of ten volumes of verse, the most representative of which are *Sonnets of a Portrait Painter* (1914), *The Man on the Hilltop* (1915) and *An April Elegy* (1917). In these, the author has distilled a warm spirituality, combining freshness of vision with an intensified seriousness.

Having been an expert collector and student of Japanese prints, Ficke has written two books on this theme. His intellectual equipment is reinforced by a strong sense of satire. Writing under the pseudonym "Anne Knish," he was one of the co-authors (with Witter Bynner) of *Spectra* (1916), which,

caricaturing some of the wilder outgrowths of the new poetry, was taken seriously by a majority of the critics and proved to be a brilliant hoax.

PORTRAIT OF AN OLD WOMAN

She limps with halting painful pace,
  Stops, wavers and creeps on again;
Peers up with dim and questioning face,
  Void of desire or doubt or pain.

Her cheeks hang gray in waxen folds
  Wherein there stirs no blood at all.
A hand, like bundled cornstalks, holds
  The tatters of a faded shawl.

Where was a breast, sunk bones she clasps;
  A knot jerks where were woman-hips;
A ropy throat sends writhing gasps
  Up to the tight line of her lips.

Here strong the city's pomp is poured . . .
  She stands, unhuman, bleak, aghast:
An empty temple of the Lord
  From which the jocund Lord has passed.

He has builded him another house,
  Whenceforth his flame, renewed and bright,
Shines stark upon these weathered brows
  Abandoned to the final night.

Arthur Davison Ficke

THE THREE SISTERS

Gone are the three, those sisters rare
  With wonder-lips and eyes ashine.
One was wise and one was fair,
  And one was mine.

Ye mourners, weave for the sleeping hair
  Of only two, your ivy vine.
For one was wise and one was fair,
  But one was mine.

SONNET

There are strange shadows fostered of the moon,
More numerous than the clear-cut shade of day. . . .
Go forth, when all the leaves whisper of June,
Into the dusk of swooping bats at play;
Or go into that late November dusk
When hills take on the noble lines of death,
And on the air the faint, astringent musk
Of rotting leaves pours vaguely troubling breath.
Then shall you see shadows whereof the sun,
Knows nothing—aye, a thousand shadows there
Shall leap and flicker and stir and stay and run,
Like petrels of the changing foul or fair;
Like ghosts of twilight, of the moon, of him
Whose homeland lies past each horizon's rim. . . .

Badger Clark

Badger Clark was born at Albia, Iowa, in 1883. He moved to Dakota Territory at the age of three months and now lives in the Black Hills of South Dakota.

Clark is one of the few men who have lived to see their work become part of folk-lore; many of his songs having been adapted and paraphrased by the cowboys who have made them their own. A version of one of his poems ("The Glory Trail"), after wide circulation among the ranchers and cowpunchers, was printed as an example of anonymous folk-song in *Poetry; A Magazine of Verse* under the title "High-Chin Bob"—and credited to "Author Unknown."

Sun and Saddle Leather (1915) and *Grass-Grown Trails* (1917) are the expression of a native singer; happy, spontaneous and seldom "literary." There is wind in these songs; the smell of camp-smoke and the colors of prairie sunsets rise from them. Free, for the most part, from affectations, Clark achieves an unusual ease in his use of the local vernacular.

THE GLORY TRAIL[1]

'Way high up the Mogollons,
  Among the mountain tops,
A lion cleaned a yearlin's bones
  And licked his thankful chops,
When on the picture who should ride,
  A-trippin' down a slope,
But High-Chin Bob, with sinful pride
  And mav'rick-hungry rope.

[1] From *Sun and Saddle Leather* by Badger Clark. Copyright, 1915. Richard G. Badger, Publisher.

"Oh, glory be to me," says he,
"And fame's unfadin' flowers!
All meddlin' hands are far away;
I ride my good top-hawse today
And I'm top-rope of the Lazy J—
Hi! kitty cat, you're ours!"

That lion licked his paw so brown
And dreamed soft dreams of veal—
And then the circlin' loop sung down
And roped him 'round his meal.
He yowled quick fury to the world
Till all the hills yelled back;
The top-hawse gave a snort and whirled
And Bob caught up the slack.

"Oh, glory be to me," laughs he.
"We've hit the glory trail.
No human man as I have read
Darst loop a ragin' lion's head,
Nor ever hawse could drag one dead
Until we told the tale."

'Way high up the Mogollons
That top-hawse done his best,
Through whippin' brush and rattlin' stones,
From canyon-floor to crest.
But ever when Bob turned and hoped
A limp remains to find,
A red-eyed lion, belly roped
But healthy, loped behind.

Badger Clark

"Oh, glory be to me," groans he.
"This glory trail is rough,
Yet even till the Judgment Morn
I'll keep this dally 'round the horn,
For never any hern born
Could stoop to holler: Nuff!'"

Three suns had rode their circle home
Beyond the desert's rim.
And turned their star-herds loose to roam
The ranges high and dim:
Yet up and down and 'round and 'cross
Bob pounded, weak and wan.
For pride still glued him to his hawse
And glory drove him on.

"Oh, glory be to me," sighs he.
"He kaint be drug to death,
But now I know beyond a doubt
Them heroes I have read about
Was only fools that stuck it out
To end of mortal breath."

'Way high up the Mogollons
A prospect man did swear
That moon dreams melted down his bones
And hoisted up his hair:
A ribby cow-hawse thundered by,
A lion trailed along,
A rider, ga'nt but chin on high,
Yelled out a crazy song.

Badger Clark

"Oh, glory be to me!" cries he,
"And to my noble noose!
Oh, stranger, tell my pards below
I took a rampin' dream in tow,
And if I never lay him low,
I'll never turn him loose!"

THE COYOTE [1]

Trailing the last gleam after,
In the valleys emptied of light,
Ripples a whimsical laughter
Under the wings of the night,
Mocking the faded west airily,
Meeting the little bats merrily,
Over the mesas it shrills
To the red moon on the hills.

Mournfully rising and waning,
Far through the moon-silvered land
Wails a weird voice of complaining
Over the thorns and the sand.
Out of blue silences eerily,
On to the black mountains wearily,
Till the dim desert is crossed,
Wanders the cry, and is lost.

[1] From *Grass-Grown Trails* by Badger Clark. Copyright, 17. Richard G. Badger, Publisher.

Badger Clark

Here by the fire's ruddy streamers,
  Tired with our hopes and our fears,
We inarticulate dreamers
  Hark to the song of our years.
Up to the brooding divinity
Far in that sparkling infinity
  Cry our despair and delight,
  Voice of the Western night!

Marguerite Wilkinson

Marguerite Ogden Bigelow was born at Halifax, Nova Scotia, November 15, 1883. She attended Northwestern University and married James G. Wilkinson in 1909.

In Vivid Gardens (1911) is a mixture of original moods and derivative manners. The later *Bluestone* (1920) is a much riper collection; a book of lyrics in which the author has made many experiments in the combination of rhythmical tunes and verbal music.

Mrs. Wilkinson is also the author of *New Voices* (1919), a series of essays on contemporary verse, reinforced with liberal quotations from both English and American poets.

BEFORE DAWN IN THE WOODS

Upon our eyelids, dear, the dew will lie,
  And on the roughened meshes of our hair,
While little feet make bold to scurry by
  And half-notes shrilly cut the quickened air.

Our clean, hard bodies, on the clean, hard ground
  Will vaguely feel that they are full of power,
And they will stir, and stretch, and look around,
  Loving the early, chill, half-lighted hour.

Marguerite Wilkinson

Loving the voices in the shadowed trees,
Loving the feet that stir the blossoming grass—
Oh, always we have known such things as these,
And knowing, can we love and let them pass?

Harry Kemp

Harry (Hibbard) Kemp, known as "the tramp-poet," was born at Youngstown, Ohio, December 15, 1883. He came East at the age of twelve, left school to enter a factory, but returned to high school to study English.

A globe-trotter by nature, he went to sea before finishing his high school course. He shipped first to Australia, then to China, from China to California, from California to the University of Kansas. After a few months in London in 1909 (he crossed the Atlantic as a stowaway) he returned to New York City, where he has lived ever since, founding his own theater in which he is actor, stage-manager, playwright and chorus.

Kemp's first book was a play, *Judas* (1910), a reversion of the biblical figure along the lines of Paul Heyse's *Mary of Magdala.* His first collection of poems, *The Cry of Youth* (1914), like the subsequent volume, *The Passing God* (1919), is full of every kind of poetry except the kind one might imagine Kemp would write. Instead of crude and boisterous verse, here is a precise and almost over-polished poetry. Kemp has, strangely enough, taken the classic formalists for his models—one can even detect the whispers of Pope and Dryden in his lines.

Chanteys and Ballads (1920) is riper and more representative. The notes are more varied, the sense of personality is more pronounced.

Harry Kemp

STREET LAMPS

Softly they take their being, one by one,
From the lamp-lighter's hand, after the sun
Has dropped to dusk . . . like little flowers they bloom
Set in long rows amid the growing gloom.

Who he who lights them is, I do not know,
Except that, every eve, with footfall slow
And regular, he passes by my room
And sets his gusty flowers of light a-bloom.

A PHANTASY OF HEAVEN

Perhaps he plays with cherubs now.
  Those little, golden boys of God.
Bending, with them, some silver bough,
  The while a seraph, head a-nod,

Slumbers on guard; how they will run
  And shout, if he should wake too soon,—
As fruit more golden than the sun
  And riper than the full-grown moon,

Conglobed in clusters, weighs them down,
  Like Atlas heaped with starry signs;
And, if they're tripped, heel over crown,
  By hidden coils of mighty vines,—

Harry Kemp

Perhaps the seraph, swift to pounce,
  Will hale them, vexed, to God—and He
Will only laugh, remembering, once
  He was a boy in Galilee!

Max Eastman

Max Eastman was born at Canandaigua, New York, January 4, 1883. Both his father and mother had been Congregationalist preachers, so it was natural that the son should turn from scholasticism to a definitely social expression. Eastman had received his A.B. at Williams in 1905; from 1907 to 1911 he had been Associate in Philosophy at Columbia University. But in the latter part of 1911, he devoted all his time to writing, studying the vast problems of economic inequality and voicing the protests of the dumb millions in a style that was all the firmer for being philosophic. In 1913, he became editor of *The Masses* which, in 1917, became *The Liberator.*

Child of the Amazons (1913) reveals the quiet lover of beauty as well as the fiery hater of injustice. The best of these poems, with many new ones, were incorporated in *Colors of Life* (1918). This volume is a far richer collection; a record of glowing hours, steadily burning truths.

Besides Eastman's poems and essays, he has written one of the most clarifying—and most readable—studies of the period. *Enjoyment of Poetry* (1913) is invaluable as a new kind of text-book, the chief purpose of which, in the words of its preface, is to increase enjoyment. Eliminating the usual academic and literary classifications, Eastman accomplishes his object, which is to show that the poetic in everyday perception and conversation should not be separated from the poetic in literature.

Max Eastman

COMING TO PORT

Our motion on the wet sea misty-cool
Is like rest; and like the hours of doom
That rise and follow one another over
Graves of sleeping battle-cruisers loom
And languish quickly in the liquid gloom.

From watching them your eyes in tears are gleaming,
And your heart is still; and like a sound
In silence is your stillness in the streaming
Of light-whispered laughter all around,
Where happy passengers are homeward bound.

Their sunny journey is in safety ending,
But for you no journey has an end.
The tears that to your eyes their light are lending
Shine in softness to no waiting friend;
Beyond the search of any eye they tend.

There is no rest for the unresting fever
Of your passion, yearning, hungry-veined;
There is no rest nor blessedness forever
That can clasp you, quivering and pained,
Whose eyes burn ever to the Unattained.

Like time, and like the river's fateful flowing,
Flowing though the ship has come to rest,
Your love is passing through the mist and going,
Going infinitely from your breast,
Surpassing time on its immortal quest.

The ship draws softly to the place of waiting,
All flush forward with a joyful aim,
And while their hands with happy hands are mating,
Lips are laughing out a happy name—
You pause, and pass among them like a flame.

HOURS

Hours when I love you, are like tranquil pools,
The liquid jewels of the frost, where
The hunted runner dips his hand, and cools
His fevered ankles, and the ferny air
Comes blowing softly on his heaving breast
Hinting the sacred mystery of rest.

AT THE AQUARIUM

Serene the silver fishes glide,
Stern-lipped, and pale, and wonder-eyed!
As, through the aged deeps of ocean,
They glide with wan and wavy motion.
They have no pathway where they go,
They flow like water to and fro,
They watch with never-winking eyes,
They watch with staring, cold surprise,
The level people in the air,
The people peering, peering there:

Max Eastman

Who wander also to and fro,
And know not why or where they go,
Yet have a wonder in their eyes,
Sometimes a pale and cold surprise.

Arturo Giovannitti

Arturo Giovannitti was born in Abruzzi, Italy, January 7, 1884. He studied at the college of his native province and came to New York when he was eighteen years old. Even as a child, Giovannitti had dreamed of America and had "learned upon the knees of his mother and father to reverence, with tears in his eyes, the name of the republic." With the dream of America as the great liberator in his heart, his first impressions were shattering. What he saw, through the eyes of the laborer, was the whiplash and legal trickery, the few ruling the many, the miseries and exploitation of the helpless. He thought of becoming a preacher, attended theological school; sought a greater outlet for his passion for democracy and became an editor; lectured, wrote pamphlets and worked continually to express "a multitude of men lost in an immensity of silence."

Although Giovannitti has written several books in Italian, his one English volume is *Arrows in the Gale* (1914). In an eloquent introduction to the poet's rough music and rougher mixture of realism and rapture, Helen Keller writes, "He makes us feel the presence of toilers behind tenement walls, behind the machinery they guide. . . . He finds voice for his message in the sighs, the dumb hopes, the agonies and thwartings of men who are bowed and broken by the monster hands of machines."

Several of Giovannitti's poems are in rhyme, but his most characteristic lines move in uplifted prose poems that shape themselves vividly to their subjects. "The Cage," with its

restrained anger, and "The Walker" are typical. "The Walker," unfortunately too long to quote in its entirety, is remarkable not only as an art-work but as a document; it is a twentieth-century "Ballad of Reading Gaol," with an intensity and mystical power of which Wilde was incapable.

FROM "THE WALKER"

I hear footsteps over my head all night.
They come and they go. Again they come and they go all night.
They come one eternity in four paces and they go one eternity in four paces, and between the coming and the going there is Silence and the Night and the Infinite.
For infinite are the nine feet of a prison cell, and endless is the march of him who walks between the yellow brick wall and the red iron gate, thinking things that cannot be chained and cannot be locked, but that wander far away in the sunlit world, each in a wild pilgrimage after a destined goal.

. . . . . .

Throughout the restless night I hear the footsteps over my head.
Who walks? I know not. It is the phantom of the jail, the sleepless brain, a man, the man, the Walker.
One-two-three-four: four paces and the wall.
One-two-three-four: four paces and the iron gate.
He has measured his space, he has measured it accurately, scrupulously, minutely, as the hangman measures the rope and the gravedigger the coffin—so many feet,

so many inches, so many fractions of an inch for each of the four paces.

One-two-three-four. Each step sounds heavy and hollow over my head, and the echo of each step sounds hollow within my head as I count them in suspense and in dread that once, perhaps, in the endless walk, there may be five steps instead of four between the yellow brick wall and the red iron gate.

But he has measured the space so accurately, so scrupulously, so minutely that nothing breaks the grave rhythm of the slow, fantastic march.

. . . . . .

All through the night he walks and he thinks.

Is it more frightful because he walks and his footsteps sound hollow over my head, or because he thinks and speaks not his thoughts?

But does he think? Why should he think? Do I think? I only hear the footsteps and count them. Four steps and the wall. Four steps and the gate. But beyond? Beyond? Where goes he beyond the gate and the wall?

He goes not beyond. His thought breaks there on the iron gate. Perhaps it breaks like a wave of rage, perhaps like a sudden flow of hope, but it always returns to beat the wall like a billow of helplessness and despair.

He walks to and fro within the narrow whirlpit of this ever storming and furious thought. Only one thought—constant, fixed, immovable, sinister, without power and without voice.

Arturo Giovannitti

A thought of madness, frenzy, agony and despair, a hell-brewed thought, for it is a natural thought. All things natural are things impossible while there are jails in the world—bread, work, happiness, peace, love.

But he thinks not of this. As he walks he thinks of the most superhuman, the most unattainable, the most impossible thing in the world:

He thinks of a small brass key that turns just half around and throws open the red iron gate.

. . . . . .

Eunice Tietjens

Eunice Tietjens (née Hammond) was born in Chicago, Illinois, July 29, 1884. She married Paul Tietjens, the composer, in 1904. During 1914 and 1916 she was Associate Editor of *Poetry; A Magazine of Verse* and went to France as war correspondent of the Chicago *Daily News* (1917-18). Her second marriage (to Cloyd Head, the writer) occurred in February, 1920.

Profiles from China (1917) is a series of sketches of people, scenes and incidents observed in the interior. Written in a fluent free verse, the poems in this collection are alive with color and personality. The succeeding *Body and Raiment* (1919) is less integrated, more derivative and diffuse. And yet, in spite of certain obvious echoes, individual poems like "The Drug Clerk," "The Steam Shovel" and a few others are worthy to stand beside her distinguished first volume.

Eunice Tietjens

THE MOST-SACRED MOUNTAIN

Space, and the twelve clean winds of heaven,
And this sharp exultation, like a cry, after the slow six thousand steps of climbing!
This is Tai Shan, the beautiful, the most holy.

Below my feet the foot-hills nestle, brown with flecks of green; and lower down the flat brown plain, the floor of earth, stretches away to blue infinity.
Beside me in this airy space the temple roofs cut their slow curves against the sky,
And one black bird circles above the void.

Space, and the twelve clean winds are here;
And with them broods eternity—a swift, white peace, a presence manifest.
The rhythm ceases here. Time has no place. This is the end that has no end.

Here when Confucius came, a half a thousand years before the Nazarene, he stepped, with me, thus into timelessness.
The stone beside us waxes old, the carven stone that says: *On this spot once Confucius stood and felt the smallness of the world below.*

The stone grows old.
Eternity
Is not for stones.

But I shall go down from this airy space, this swift white
peace, this stinging exultation;
And time will close about me, and my soul stir to the
rhythm of the daily round.
Yet, having known, life will not press so close,
And always I shall feel time ravel thin about me.
For once I stood
In the white windy presence of eternity.

THE DRUG CLERK

The drug clerk stands behind the counter
Young and dapper and debonair. . . .

Before him burn the great unwinking lights,
The hectic stars of city nights,
Red as hell's pit, green as a mermaid's hair.
A queer half-acrid smell is in the air.
Behind him on the shelves in ordered rows
With strange, abbreviated names
Dwell half the facts of life. That young man knows,
Bottled and boxed and powdered here,
Dumb tragedies, deceptions, secret shames,
And comedy and fear.

Sleep slumbers here, like a great quiet sea
Shrunk to this bottle's compass; sleep that brings
Sweet respite from the teeth of pain
To those poor tossing things

That the white nurses watch so thoughtfully.
And here again
Dwell the shy souls of Maytime flowers
That shall make sweeter still those poignant hours
When wide-eyed youth looks on the face of love.
And, for those others who have found too late
The bitter fruits thereof,
Here are cosmetics, powders, paints,—the arts
That hunted women use to hunt again
With scented flesh for bait.
And here is comfort for the hearts
Of sucking babes in their first teething pain.
Here dwells the substance of huge fervid dreams,
Fantastic, many-colored, shot with gleams
Of ecstasy and madness, that shall come
To some pale, twitching sleeper in a bunk.
And here is courage, cheaply bought
To cure a blue sick funk,
And dearly paid for in the final sum.
Here in this powdered fly is caught
Desire more ravishing than Tarquin's. . . .
And at last
When the one weary hope is past
Here is the sole escape,
The little postern in the house of breath
Where pallid fugitives keep tryst with death.

All this the drug clerk knows and there he stands,
Young and dapper and debonair. . .

Eunice Tietjens

He rests a pair of slender hands,
Much manicured, upon the counter there
And speaks: "No, we don't carry no pomade,
We only cater to the high-class trade."

Sara Teasdale

Sara Teasdale was born August 8, 1884, at St. Louis, Missouri, and educated there. After leaving school, she traveled in Europe and the Near East. In 1914, she married Ernst B. Filsinger, who has written several books on foreign trade, and moved to New York City in 1916.

Her first book was a slight volume, *Sonnets to Duse* (1907), giving little promise of the rich lyricism which was to follow. *Helen of Troy and Other Poems* (1911) contains the first hints of that delicate craftsmanship and authentic loveliness which this poet has brought to such a high pitch. The six monologues which open the volume are splendid delineations written in a blank verse that is as musical as many of her lyrics. At times it suffers from too conscious a cleverness; the dexterity with which Miss Teasdale turns a phrase or twists her last line is frequently too obtrusive to be wholly enjoyable.

Rivers to the Sea (1915) emphasizes this epigrammatic skill, but a greater restraint is here, a warmer spontaneity. The new collection contains at least a dozen unforgettable snatches, lyrics in which the words seem to fall into place without art or effort. Seldom employing metaphor or striking imagery, almost bare of ornament, these poems have the sheer magic of triumphant song. Theirs is an artlessness that is more than an art.

Love Songs (1917) is a collection of Miss Teasdale's previous melodies for the *viola d'amore* together with several new tunes. The new poems emphasize the way in which this poet achieves a direct enchantment without verbal subtleties. They also em-

phasize their superiority to the earlier love lyrics that were written in a mood of literary romance, of artificial moonlit roses, languishing lutes, balconies, passionate guitars—a mood that was not so much erotic as Pierrotic.

Flame and Shadow (1920) is by far the best of her books. Here the beauty is fuller and deeper; an almost mystic radiance plays from these starry verses. Technically, also, this volume marks Miss Teasdale's greatest advance. The words are chosen with a keener sense of their actual as well as their musical values; the rhythms are much more subtle and varied; the line moves with a greater naturalness. Beneath the symbolism of poems like "Water Lilies" and "The Long Hill," one is conscious of a finer artistry, a more flexible speech that is all the lovelier for its slight (and logical) irregularities.

Besides her own books, Miss Teasdale has compiled an anthology, *The Answering Voice* (1917), comprising one hundred love lyrics by women.

NIGHT SONG AT AMALFI [1]

I asked the heaven of stars
  What I should give my love—
It answered me with silence,
  Silence above.

I asked the darkened sea
  Down where the fishermen go—
It answered me with silence,
  Silence below.

[1] Reprinted by permission of the publishers, The Macmillan Company, from *Love Songs* by Sara Teasdale.

Sara Teasdale

Oh, I could give him weeping,
  Or I could give him song—
But how can I give silence
  My whole life long?

SPRING NIGHT[1]

The park is filled with night and fog,
  The veils are drawn about the world,
The drowsy lights along the paths
  Are dim and pearled.

Gold and gleaming the empty streets,
  Gold and gleaming the misty lake,
The mirrored lights like sunken swords,
  Glimmer and shake.

Oh, is it not enough to be
Here with this beauty over me?
My throat should ache with praise, and I
Should kneel in joy beneath the sky.
O beauty, are you not enough?
Why am I crying after love
With youth, a singing voice, and eyes
To take earth's wonder with surprise?
Why have I put off my pride,
Why am I unsatisfied,—
I, for whom the pensive night
Binds her cloudy hair with light,—

[1] Reprinted by permission of the publishers, The Macmillan Company, from *Rivers to the Sea* by Sara Teasdale.

Sara Teasdale

I, for whom all beauty burns
Like incense in a million urns?
O beauty, are you not enough?
Why am I crying after love?

I SHALL NOT CARE[1]

When I am dead and over me bright April
  Shakes out her rain-drenched hair,
Though you should lean above me broken-hearted,
  I shall not care.

I shall have peace, as leafy trees are peaceful
  When rain bends down the bough;
And I shall be more silent and cold-hearted
  Than you are now.

THE LONG HILL[2]

I must have passed the crest a while ago
  And now I am going down—
Strange to have crossed the crest and not to know,
  But the brambles were always catching the hem of my gown.

[1] Reprinted by permission of the publishers, The Macmillan Company, from *Love Songs* by Sara Teasdale.

[2] Reprinted by permission of the publishers, The Macmillan Company, from *Flame and Shadow* by Sara Teasdale.

Sara Teasdale

All the morning I thought how proud I should be
To stand there straight as a queen,
Wrapped in the wind and the sun with the world under me—
But the air was dull, there was little I could have seen.

It was nearly level along the beaten track
And the brambles caught in my gown—
But it's no use now to think of turning back,
The rest of the way will be only going down.

WATER LILIES [1]

If you have forgotten water-lilies floating
On a dark lake among mountains in the afternoon shade,
If you have forgotten their wet, sleepy fragrance,
Then you can return and not be afraid.

But if you remember, then turn away forever
To the plains and the prairies where pools are far apart,
There you will not come at dusk on closing water lilies,
And the shadow of mountains will not fall on your heart.

[1] Reprinted by permission of the publishers, The Macmillan Company, from *Flame and Shadow* by Sara Teasdale.

Sara Teasdale

TIRED

If I shall make no poems any more,
  There will be rest, at least, so let it be,
Time to look up at golden stars and listen
  To the long mellow thunder of the sea.
The year will turn for me, I shall delight in
  All animals, and some of my own kind;
Sharing with no one but myself the frosty
  And half ironic musings of my mind.

Gladys Cromwell

Gladys Cromwell was born November 28, 1885, in New York City. She was educated in New York private schools and lived abroad a great deal. "Her life," writes Anne Dunn, "was little indented by outer events, being wholly of the mind and spirit." She was most at home in the world within herself, sensitive and—to the final, tragic degree—self-effacing.

In January, 1918, Gladys and Dorothea, her twin-sister, enrolled in the Canteen Service of the Red Cross, sailed for France and were stationed at Châlons. Both girls worked unremittingly for eight months. It was only at the end of their desperate labors that they gave way to hopelessness, believing their efforts futile and the whole world desolate. Signs of a mental breakdown show in their diaries as early as October. "After the armistice," writes Anne Dunn in her biographical note which serves as an appreciative epilogue to Gladys Cromwell's *Poems*, "they showed symptoms of nervous prostration; but years of self-control and consideration for others made them conceal the black horror in which they lived,

the agony through which they saw a world which, they felt, contained no refuge for beauty or quiet thought. And when, on their way home, they jumped from the deck of the *Lorraine* it was in response to a vision that promised them fulfilment and peace." After their death, which occurred January 19, 1919, the French Government awarded the two sisters the Croix de Guerre.

Gates of Utterance (1915) has something more than the usual "promise." But the best of Miss Cromwell's work can be found in her posthumously published *Poems* (1919), which, in 1920, received the yearly prize offered by the Poetry Society of America, dividing the honor with Neihardt's *The Song of Three Friends.* Her most significant poems betray that attitude to life which was at the heart of her tragedy—a preoccupation that was a mixture of fascination and fear. Her lines, never mediocre, are introspective and fraught with serious concern—the work of a frailer and unsmiling Emily Dickinson. Several of the best of her delicate songs, like the two lyrics quoted, tremble on the verge of greatness.

THE CROWNING GIFT [1]

I have had courage to accuse;
And a fine wit that could upbraid;
And a nice cunning that could bruise;
And a shrewd wisdom, unafraid
Of what weak mortals fear to lose.

I have had virtue to despise
The sophistry of pious fools;
I have had firmness to chastise;
And intellect to make me rules
To estimate and exorcise.

[1] Reprinted by permission of the publishers, The Macmillan Company, from *Poems* by Gladys Cromwell.

Gladys Cromwell

I have had knowledge to be true;
My faith could obstacles remove;
But now my frailty I endue.
I would have courage now to love,
And lay aside the strength I knew.

THE MOULD[1]

No doubt this active will,
So bravely steeped in sun,
This will has vanquished Death
And foiled oblivion.

But this indifferent clay,
This fine, experienced hand
So quiet, and these thoughts
That all unfinished stand,

Feel death as though it were
A shadowy caress;
And win and wear a frail
Archaic wistfulness.

Ezra Pound

Ezra (Loomis) Pound was born at Hailey, Idaho, October 30, 1885; attended Hamilton College and the University of Pennsylvania; and went abroad, seeking fresh material to complete a thesis on Lope de Vega, in 1908. After visiting Spain on a roundabout journey to England, where he took up his resi-

[1] Reprinted by permission of the publishers, The Macmillan Company, from *Poems* by Gladys Cromwell.

dence and where he has lived ever since, Pound halted for a while in Italy. It was there, in Venice, to be precise, that Pound's first book, *A Lume Spento* (1908), was printed. The following year Pound went to London and the chief poems of the little volume were incorporated in *Personæ* (1909), a small collection containing some of Pound's finest work.

Although the young American was a total stranger to the English literary world, his book made a definite impression on critics of all shades and tastes. Edward Thomas, one of the most careful appraisers, wrote "the beauty of it is the beauty of passion, sincerity and intensity, not of beautiful words and images and suggestions. . . . The thought dominates the words and is greater than they are." Another critic (Scott James) placed the chief emphasis on Pound's metrical innovations, saying, "At first the whole thing may seem to be mere madness and rhetoric, a vain exhibition of force and passion without beauty. But as we read on, these curious meters seem to have a law and order of their own."

Exultations (1909) was printed in the autumn of the same year that saw the appearance of *Personæ*. It was received with even greater cordiality; a new force and freedom were manifest in such poems as "Sestina: Altaforte," "Ballad of the Goodly Fere," "Francesca" and "Histrion."

In both of these books there was evident Pound's erudition—a familiarity with mediaeval literature, Provençal singers, Troubadour ballads—that, later on, was to degenerate into pedantry and become hard and dry. Too often in his later work, Pound seems to be more the archaeologist than the artist, digging with little energy and less enthusiasm. *Canzoni* (1911) and *Ripostes* (1912) both contain much that is sharp and living; they also contain the germs of desiccation and decay. Pound began to scatter his talents; to start movements which he quickly discarded for new ones; to spend himself in poetic propaganda for the Imagists and others (see Preface); to give more and more time to translation (*The Sonnets of Guido Cavalcanti* appeared in 1912) and arrangements from the

Chinese (*Cathay,* paraphrased from the notes of Ernest Fenollosa, was issued in 1915); to lay the chief stress on *technique,* shades of color, verbal *nuances.* The result was a lassitude of the creative faculties, an impoverishment of emotion. In the later books, Pound begins to suffer from a decadence which appraises the values in life chiefly as aesthetic values. And this decadence expresses itself in a weariness, a sterility of the imagination. Real feeling becomes rarer in his work and the poet descends to flashy trivialities, vagaries of assertion or sheer *bravado* of expression—wasting much of his gift in a mere tilting at convention.

But though this is true of a great quantity of his recent work, though he often seems a living anachronism, drawing life not from life itself but only from books, many of the poems in *Lustra* (1917) yield a hard brightness. The influence of Browning and the pre-Raphaelites is less pronounced and reflections of his earlier energy stand out with a peculiar brilliance.

Too special to achieve permanence, too intellectual to become popular, Pound's contribution to his age should not be underestimated. He was a pioneer in the new forms; he fought dullness wherever he encountered it; under his leadership the Imagists became not only a group but a protest; he helped to make many of the paths which a score of unconsciously influenced poets tread with such ease and nonchalance. Much of his poetry gesticulates instead of speaking, a great portion of his art is poetry in pantomime. And yet, without Pound, American poetry would scarcely have been the many-voiced, multi-colored thing that it is.

A GIRL

The tree has entered my hands,
The sap has ascended my arms,
The tree has grown in my breast
Downward,
The branches grow out of me, like arms.

Ezra Pound

Tree you are,
Moss you are,
You are violets with wind above them.
A child—so high—you are;
And all this is folly to the world.

A VIRGINAL

No, no! Go from me. I have left her lately.
I will not spoil my sheath with lesser brightness,
For my surrounding air has a new lightness;
Slight are her arms, yet they have bound me straitly
And left me cloaked as with a gauze of aether;
As with sweet leaves; as with a subtle clearness.
Oh, I have picked up magic in her nearness
To sheathe me half in half the things that sheathe her.

No, no! Go from me. I have still the flavour,
Soft as spring wind that's come from birchen bowers.
Green come the shoots, aye April in the branches,
As winter's wound with her sleight hand she staunches,
Hath of the trees a likeness of the savour:
As white their bark, so white this lady's hours.

BALLAD FOR GLOOM

For God, our God is a gallant foe
That playeth behind the veil.

Ezra Pound

I have loved my God as a child at heart
That seeketh deep bosoms for rest,
I have loved my God as a maid to man—
But lo, this thing is best:

To love your God as a gallant foe that plays behind
the veil;
To meet your God as the night winds meet beyond
Arcturus' pale.

I have played with God for a woman,
I have staked with my God for truth,
I have lost to my God as a man, clear-eyed—
His dice be not of ruth.

For I am made as a naked blade,
But hear ye this thing in sooth:

Who loseth to God as man to man
Shall win at the turn of the game.
I have drawn my blade where the lightnings meet
But the ending is the same:
Who loseth to God as the sword blades lose
Shall win at the end of the game.

For God, our God is a gallant foe that playeth behind
the veil.
When God deigns not to overthrow hath need of triple
mail.

Ezra Pound

Δωρια

Be in me as the eternal moods
of the bleak wind, and not
As transient things are—
gaiety of flowers.
Have me in the strong loneliness
of sunless cliffs
And of gray waters.
Let the gods speak softly of us
In days hereafter,
the shadowy flowers of Orcus
Remember thee.

IN A STATION OF THE METRO

The apparition of these faces in the crowd;
Petals on a wet, black bough.

Louis Untermeyer

Louis Untermeyer was born October 1, 1885, in New York City, where he has lived, except for brief sojourns in Maine and New Jersey, ever since. His education was sketchy; his continued failure to comprehend algebra and geometry kept him from entering college. His one ambition was to become a composer. At sixteen he appeared as a pianist in semi-professional circles; at seventeen he entered his father's jewelry manufacturing establishment, of which he became designer and factory manager.

Louis Untermeyer

Untermeyer's first volume was *The Younger Quire* (1911), a twenty-four-page burlesque of an anthology (*The Younger Choir*). It was issued anonymously and only one hundred copies were printed. Later in the same year, he published a sequence of some seventy lyrics entitled *First Love* (1911) in which the influences of Heine, Henley and Housman were not only obvious but crippling. With the exception of about eight of these songs, the volume is devoid of character and, in spite of a certain technical facility, wholly undistinguished.

It was with *Challenge* (1914), now in its fourth edition, that the author first spoke in his own idiom. Although the ghost of Henley still haunts some of these pages, poems like "Summons," "Landscapes" and "Caliban in the Coal Mines" show "a fresh and lyrical sympathy with the modern world. . . . His vision" (thus the Boston *Transcript*) "is a social vision, his spirit a passionately energized command of the forces of justice."

Challenge was succeeded by *These Times* (1917), evidently an "interval" book which, lacking the concentration and unity of the better known collection, sought (not always successfully) for larger horizons. Certain poems (like "Swimmers," "The Laughers" and the colloquial sonnets) stand out, but as a whole it has neither the energy of his earlier nor the surety of his later work. *The New Adam* (1920) is a more satisfactory unit; here the varied passions are fused in a new heat.

Besides this serious poetry, Untermeyer has published two volumes of critical parodies, "—— *and Other Poets*" (1917) and *Including Horace* (1919)—paraphrases of the Latin bard as various classic and modern poets might have rendered him. He has also printed a strict metrical translation of three hundred and twenty-five *Poems of Heinrich Heine* (1917); a volume of prose criticism, *The New Era in American Poetry* (1919); and two text-books. He was one of the Associate Editors of *The Seven Arts* (1916-17) and has lectured at various universities in the Eastern States.

Louis Untermeyer

SUMMONS

The eager night and the impetuous winds,
The hints and whispers of a thousand lures,
And all the swift persuasion of the Spring,
Surged from the stars and stones, and swept me on . . .
The smell of honeysuckles, keen and clear,
Startled and shook me, with the sudden thrill
Of some well-known but half-forgotten voice.
A slender stream became a naked sprite,
Flashed around curious bends, and winked at me
Beyond the turns, alert and mischievous.
A saffron moon, dangling among the trees,
Seemed like a toy balloon caught in the boughs,
Flung there in sport by some too-mirthful breeze . . .
And as it hung there, vivid and unreal,
The whole world's lethargy was brushed away;
The night kept tugging at my torpid mood
And tore it into shreds. A warm air blew
My wintry slothfulness beyond the stars;
And over all indifference there streamed
A myriad urges in one rushing wave . . .
Touched with the lavish miracles of earth,
I felt the brave persistence of the grass;
The far desire of rivulets; the keen,
Unconquerable fervor of the thrush;
The endless labors of the patient worm;
The lichen's strength; the prowess of the ant;
The constancy of flowers; the blind belief
Of ivy climbing slowly toward the sun,

The eternal struggles and eternal deaths—
And yet the groping faith of every root!
Out of old graves arose the cry of life;
Out of the dying came the deathless call.
And, thrilling with a new sweet restlessness,
The thing that was my boyhood woke in me—
Dear, foolish fragments made me strong again;
Valiant adventures, dreams of those to come,
And all the vague, heroic hopes of youth,
With fresh abandon, like a fearless laugh,
Leaped up to face the heaven's unconcern. . . .

And then—veil upon veil was torn aside—
Stars, like a host of merry girls and boys,
Danced gaily 'round me, plucking at my hand;
The night, scorning its stubborn mystery,
Leaned down and pressed new courage in my heart;
The hermit-thrush, throbbing with more than Song,
Sang with a happy challenge to the skies;
Love and the faces of a world of children
Swept like a conquering army through my blood.
And Beauty, rising out of all its forms,
Beauty, the passion of the universe,
Flamed with its joy, a thing too great for tears,
And, like a wine, poured itself out for me
To drink of, to be warmed with, and to go
Refreshed and strengthened to the ceaseless fight;
To meet with confidence the cynic years;
Battling in wars that never can be won,
Seeking the lost cause and the brave defeat.

Louis Untermeyer

CALIBAN IN THE COAL MINES

God, we don't like to complain
  We know that the mine is no lark—
But—there's the pools from the rain;
  But—there's the cold and the dark.

God, You don't know what it is—
  You, in Your well-lighted sky—
Watching the meteors whizz;
  Warm, with the sun always by.

God, if You had but the moon
  Stuck in Your cap for a lamp,
Even You'd tire of it soon,
  Down in the dark and the damp.

Nothing but blackness above,
  And nothing that moves but the cars. . . .
God, if You wish for our love,
  Fling us a handful of stars!

SWIMMERS

I took the crazy short-cut to the bay;
Over a fence or two and through a hedge,
Jumping a private road, along the edge
Of backyards full of drying wash it lay.

I ran, electric with elation,
Sweating, impetuous and wild
For a swift plunge in the sea that smiled,
Quiet and luring, half a mile away.
This was the final thrill, the last sensation
That capped four hours of violence and laughter:
To have, with casual friends and casual jokes,
Hard sport, a cold swim and fresh linen after . . .
And now, the last set being played and over,
I hurried past the ruddy lakes of clover;
I swung my racket at astonished oaks,
My arm still tingling from aggressive strokes.
Tennis was over for the day—
I took the leaping short-cut to the bay.

Then the swift plunge into the cool, green dark—
The windy waters rushing past me, through me;
Filled with a sense of some heroic lark,
Exulting in a vigor clean and roomy.
Swiftly I rose to meet the feline sea
That sprang upon me with a hundred claws,
And grappled, pulled me down and played with me.
Then, tense and breathless in the tightening pause
When one wave grows into a toppling acre,
I dived headlong into the foremost breaker;
Pitting against a cold and turbulent strife
The feverish intensity of life.

Out of the foam I lurched and rode the wave,
Swimming, hand over hand, against the wind;

I felt the sea's vain pounding, and I grinned
Knowing I was its master, not its slave.
Oh, the proud total of those lusty hours—
The give and take of rough and vigorous tussles
With happy sinews and rejoicing muscles;
The knowledge of my own miraculous powers,
Feeling the force in one small body bent
To curb and tame this towering element.

Back on the curving beach I stood again,
Facing the bath-house, when a group of men,
Stumbling beneath some sort of weight, went by.
I could not see the hidden thing they carried;
I only heard: "He never gave a cry"—
"Who's going to tell her?"—"Yes, and they just
married"—
"Such a good swimmer, too." . . . And then they passed;
Leaving the silence throbbing and aghast.

A moment there my buoyant heart hung slack,
And then the glad, barbaric blood came back
Singing a livelier tune; and in my pulse
Beat the great wave that surges and exults. . . .
Why I was there and whither I must go
I did not care. Enough for me to know
The same unresting struggle and the glowing
Beauty of spendthrift hours, bravely showing
Life, an adventure perilous and gay;
And Death, a long and vivid holiday.

Louis Untermeyer

HANDS

Strange, how this smooth and supple joint can be
  Put to so many purposes. It checks
And rears the monsters of machinery
  And shapes the idle gallantries of sex.

Those hands that light the fuse and dig the trap,
  Fingers that spin the earth or plunge through shame—
And yours, that lie so lightly in your lap,
  Are only blood and dust—all are the same.

What mastery directs them through the world
  And gives these delicate bones so great a power?
You drop your head. You sleep. Your hands are curled
  Loosely, like some half-opened, perfumed flower.

An hour ago they burned in mine and sent
  Armies with banners charging through my veins.
Now they are cool and white; they rest content,
  Curved in a smile. The mystery remains.

A SIDE STREET

On the warm Sunday afternoons
And every evening in the Spring and Summer
When the night hurries the late home-comer
And the air grows softer, and scraps of tunes
Float from the open windows and jar
Against the voices of children and the hum of a car;

Louis Untermeyer

When the city noises commingle and melt
With a restless something half-seen, half-felt—
I see them always there,
Upon the low, smooth wall before the church;
That row of little girls who sit and stare
Like sparrows on a granite perch.
They come in twittering couples or walk alone
To their gray bough of stone,
Sometimes by twos and threes, sometimes as many as five—
But always they sit there on the narrow coping
Bright-eyed and solemn, scarcely hoping
To see more than what is merely moving and alive. . . .
They hear the couples pass; the lisp of happy feet
Increases and the night grows suddenly sweet. . . .

Before the quiet church that smells of death
They sit.
And Life sweeps past them with a rushing breath
And reaches out and plucks them by the hand
And calls them boldly, whispering to each
In some strange speech
They tremble to but cannot understand.
It thrills and troubles them, as one by one,
The days run off like water through a sieve;
While, with a gaze as candid as the sun,
Poignant and puzzled and inquisitive,
They come and sit,—
A part of life and yet apart from it.

Jean Starr Untermeyer

Jean Starr was born at Zanesville, Ohio, May 13, 1886, and educated at the Putnam Seminary in the city of her birth. At sixteen, she came to New York City, pursuing special studies at Columbia. In 1907 she married Louis Untermeyer and, although she had written some prose previous to the poetic renascence, her first volume was published more than ten years later.

Growing Pains (1918) is a thin book of thirty-four poems, the result of eight years slow and self-critical creation. This careful and highly selective process does much to bring the volume up to an unusually high level; a severity of taste and standards maintain the poet on the same austere plane. Perfection is almost a passion with her; the first poem in the book declares:

> I would rather work in stubborn rock
> All the years of my life;
> And make one strong thing
> And set it in a high, clean place,
> To recall the granite strength of my desire.

Acutely self-analytical, there is a stern, uncompromising relentlessness toward her introspections that keeps them from being wistful or pathetic. These poems are, as she explains in her title-poem—

> No songs for an idle lute,
> No pretty tunes of coddled ills,
> But the bare chart of my growing pains.

Intellect is always in the ascendency, even in the most ecstatic verses. In an almost religious poem, "A Man" (dedicated to her father), she pictures herself as a child, and expresses the whole psychology of our juvenile love of poor literature in lines like:

> A book held gaping on my knees,
> Watering a sterile romance with my thoughts.

But it is not only her keen search for truth and an equally keen eye for the exact word that make these poems distinctive.

Jean Starr Untermeyer

A sharp color sense, a surprising whimsicality, a translation of the ordinary in terms of the beautiful, illumine such poems as "Sinfonia Domestica," "Clothes," "Autumn." In the last named, with its brilliant combination of painting and housewifery, Mrs. Untermeyer has reproduced her early environment with a bright pungency; "Verhaeren's Flemish *genre* pictures are no better," writes Amy Lowell. Several of her purely pictorial poems establish a swift kinship between the most romantic and most prosaic objects. The tiny "Moonrise" is an example; so is "High Tide," that, in one extended metaphor, turns the mere fact of a physical law into a most arresting and noble fancy.

Dreams Out of Darkness (1921) is a ripening of this author's powers with a richer musical undercurrent. This increase of melody is manifest on every page, possibly most striking in "Lake Song," which, beneath its symbolism, is one of the most liquid unrhymed lyrics of the period.

HIGH TIDE

I edged back against the night.
The sea growled assault on the wave-bitten shore.
And the breakers,
Like young and impatient hounds,
Sprang with rough joy on the shrinking sand.
Sprang—but were drawn back slowly
With a long, relentless pull,
Whimpering, into the dark.

Then I saw who held them captive;
And I saw how they were bound
With a broad and quivering leash of light,
Held by the moon,
As, calm and unsmiling,
She walked the deep fields of the sky.

Jean Starr Untermeyer

AUTUMN

(To My Mother)

How memory cuts away the years,
And how clean the picture comes
Of autumn days, brisk and busy;
Charged with keen sunshine.
And you, stirred with activity,
The spirit of those energetic days.

There was our back-yard,
So plain and stripped of green,
With even the weeds carefully pulled away
From the crooked red bricks that made the walk,
And the earth on either side so black.

Autumn and dead leaves burning in the sharp air.
And winter comforts coming in like a pageant.
I shall not forget them:—
Great jars laden with the raw green of pickles,
Standing in a solemn row across the back of the porch,
Exhaling the pungent dill;
And in the very centre of the yard,
You, tending the great catsup kettle of gleaming copper,
Where fat, red tomatoes bobbed up and down
Like jolly monks in a drunken dance.
And there were bland banks of cabbages that came by
the wagon-load,

Soon to be cut into delicate ribbons
Only to be crushed by the heavy, wooden stompers.
Such feathery whiteness—to come to kraut!
And after, there were grapes that hid their brightness
under a grey dust,
Then gushed thrilling, purple blood over the fire;
And enamelled crab-apples that tricked with their fragrance
But were bitter to taste.
And there were spicy plums and ill-shaped quinces,
And long string beans floating in pans of clear water
Like slim, green fishes.
And there was fish itself,
Salted, silver herring from the city. . . .

And you moved among these mysteries,
Absorbed and smiling and sure;
Stirring, tasting, measuring,
With the precision of a ritual.
I like to think of you in your years of power—
You, now so shaken and so powerless—
High priestess of your home.

SINFONIA DOMESTICA

When the white wave of a glory that is hardly I
Breaks through my mind and washes it clean,
I know at last the meaning of my ecstasy,
And know at last my wish and what it can mean.

Jean Starr Untermeyer

To have sped out of life that night—to have vanished
  Not as a vision, but as something touched, yet grown
Radiant as the moonlight, circling my naked shoulder;
  Wrapped in a dream of beauty, longed for, but never
    known.

For how with our daily converse, even the sweet sharing
  Of thoughts, of food, of home, of common life,
How shall I be that glory, that last desire
  For which men struggle? Is Romance in a wife?

Must I bend a heart that is bowed to breaking
  With a frustration, inevitable and slow,
And bank my flame to a low hearth fire, believing
  You'll come for warmth and life to its tempered glow?

Shall I mould my hope anew, to one of service,
  And tell my uneasy soul "Behold, this is good."
And meet you (if we do meet), even at Heaven's threshold,
  With ewer and basin, with clothing and with food?

LAKE SONG

The lapping of lake water
Is like the weeping of women,
The weeping of ancient women
Who grieved without rebellion.

The lake falls over the shore
Like tears on their curven bosoms.
Here is languid, luxurious wailing;
The wailing of kings' daughters.

Jean Starr Untermeyer

So do we ever cry,
A soft, unmutinous crying,
When we know ourselves each a princess
Locked fast within her tower.

The lapping of lake water
Is like the weeping of women,
The fertile tears of women
That water the dreams of men.

John Gould Fletcher

John Gould Fletcher was born at Little Rock, Arkansas, January 3, 1886. He was educated at Phillips Academy (Andover, Massachusetts) and Harvard (1903-7) and, after spending several years in Massachusetts, moved to England, where, except for brief visits to the United States, he has lived ever since.

In 1913, Fletcher published five tiny books of poems which he has referred to as "his literary wild oats," five small collections of experimental and faintly interesting verse. Two years later, Fletcher appeared as a decidedly less conservative and far more arresting poet with *Irradiations—Sand and Spray* (1915). This volume is full of an extraordinary fancy; imagination riots through it, even though it is often a bloodless and bodiless imagination. It is crowded—even overcrowded—with æsthetic subtleties, a sort of brilliant and haphazard series of improvisations.

In the following book, *Goblins and Pagodas* (1916), Fletcher carries his unrelated harmonies much further. Color dominates him; the ambitious set of eleven "color symphonies" is an elaborate design in which the tone as well as the thought is summoned by color-associations, sometimes closely related, sometimes far-fetched. "It contains," says Conrad Aiken in his appreciative chapter on Fletcher in *Scepticisms,* "little of

the emotion which relates to the daily life of men and women. . . . It is a sort of absolute poetry, a poetry of detached waver and brilliance, a beautiful flowering of language alone—a parthenogenesis, as if language were fertilized by itself rather than by thought or feeling. Remove the magic of phrase and sound and there is nothing left: no thread of continuity, no thought, no story, no emotion. But the magic of phrase and sound is powerful, and it takes one into a fantastic world."

Meanwhile, Fletcher has been developing. After having appeared in the three Imagist anthologies, he sought for depths rather than surfaces. Beginning with his majestic "Lincoln," his work has had a closer relation to humanity; a moving mysticism speaks from *The Tree of Life* (1918), the more obviously native *Granite and Breakers* (1921) and the later uncollected poems. Although the unconscious too often dictates Fletcher's fantasies, a calm music dominates his shorter poems, a grave and subdued lyricism moves and enriches them.

THE SWAN

Under a wall of bronze,
Where beeches dip and trail
Their branches in the water;
With red-tipped head and wings—
A beaked ship under sail—
There glides a single swan.

Under the autumn trees
He goes. The branches quiver,
Dance in the wraith-like water,
Which ripples beneath the sedge
With the slackening furrow that glides
In his wake when he is gone:
The beeches bow dark heads.

Into the windless dusk,
Where in mist great towers stand
Guarding a lonely strand,
That is bodiless and dim,
He speeds with easy stride;
And I would go beside,
Till the low brown hills divide
At last, for me and him.

LONDON NIGHTFALL

I saw the shapes that stood upon the clouds:
And they were tiger-breasted, shot with light,
And all of them, lifting long trumpets together,
Blew over the city, for the night to come.
Down in the street, we floundered in the mud;
Above, in endless files, gold angels came
And stood upon the clouds, and blew their horns
For night.

Like a wet petal crumpled,
Twilight fell soddenly on the weary city;
The 'buses lurched and groaned,
The shops put up their doors.
But skywards, far aloft,
The angels, vanishing, waved broad plumes of gold,
Summoning spirits from a thousand hills
To pour the thick night out upon the earth.

John Gould Fletcher

DAWN

Above the east horizon,
The great red flower of the dawn
Opens slowly, petal by petal;
The trees emerge from darkness
With ghostly silver leaves,
Dew powdered.
Now consciousness emerges
Reluctantly out of tides of sleep;
Finding with cold surprise
No strange new thing to match its dreams,
But merely the familiar shapes
Of bedpost, window-pane, and wall.

Within the city,
The streets which were the last to fall to sleep,
Hold yet stale fragments of the night.
Sleep oozes out of stagnant ash-barrels,
Sleep drowses over litter in the streets.
Sleep nods upon the milkcans by back doors.
And, in shut rooms,
Behind the lowered window-blinds,
Drawn white faces unwittingly flout the day.

But, at the edges of the city,
Sleep is already washed away;
Light filters through the moist green leaves,
It runs into the cups of flowers,

It leaps in sparks through drops of dew,
It whirls against the window-panes
With waking birds;
Blinds are rolled up and chimneys smoke,
Feet clatter past in silent paths,
And down white vanishing ways of steel,
A dozen railway trains converge
Upon night's stronghold.

LINCOLN *

I

Like a gaunt, scraggly pine
Which lifts its head above the mournful sandhills;
And patiently, through dull years of bitter silence,
Untended and uncared for, begins to grow.

Ungainly, labouring, huge,
The wind of the north has twisted and gnarled its branches;
Yet in the heat of midsummer days, when thunder-clouds ring the horizon,
A nation of men shall rest beneath its shade.

And it shall protect them all,
Hold everyone safe there, watching aloof in silence;
Until at last one mad stray bolt from the zenith
Shall strike it in an instant down to earth.

* See pages 51, 114, 123, 232, 245, 252.

II

There was a darkness in this man; an immense and hollow darkness,
Of which we may not speak, nor share with him, nor enter;
A darkness through which strong roots stretched downwards into the earth
Towards old things;
Towards the herdman-kings who walked the earth and spoke with God,
Towards the wanderers who sought for they knew not what, and found their goal at last;
Towards the men who waited, only waited patiently when all seemed lost,
Many bitter winters of defeat;
Down to the granite of patience
These roots swept, knotted fibrous roots, prying, piercing, seeking,
And drew from the living rock and the living waters about it
The red sap to carry upwards to the sun.

Not proud, but humble,
Only to serve and pass on, to endure to the end through service;
For the ax is laid at the root of the trees, and all that bring not forth good fruit
Shall be cut down on the day to come and cast into the fire.

John Gould Fletcher

III

There is silence abroad in the land to-day,
And in the hearts of men, a deep and anxious silence;
And, because we are still at last, those bronze lips slowly open,
Those hollow and weary eyes take on a gleam of light.

Slowly a patient, firm-syllabled voice cuts through the endless silence
Like labouring oxen that drag a plow through the chaos of rude clay-fields:
"I went forward as the light goes forward in early spring,
But there were also many things which I left behind.

"Tombs that were quiet;
One, of a mother, whose brief light went out in the darkness,
One, of a loved one, the snow on whose grave is long falling,
One, only of a child, but it was mine.

"Have you forgot your graves? Go, question them in anguish,
Listen long to their unstirred lips. From your hostages to silence,
Learn there is no life without death, no dawn without sun-setting,
No victory but to Him who has given all."

IV

The clamour of cannon dies down, the furnace-mouth
of the battle is silent.
The midwinter sun dips and descends, the earth takes
on afresh its bright colours.
But he whom we mocked and obeyed not, he whom we
scorned and mistrusted,
He has descended, like a god, to his rest.

Over the uproar of cities,
Over the million intricate threads of life wavering and
crossing,
In the midst of problems we know not, tangling, per-
plexing, ensnaring,
Rises one white tomb alone.

Beam over it, stars.
Wrap it round, stripes—stripes red for the pain that he
bore for you—
Enfold it forever, O flag, rent, soiled, but repaired
through your anguish;
Long as you keep him there safe, the nations shall bow
to your law.

Strew over him flowers;
Blue forget-me-nots from the north, and the bright pink
arbutus
From the east, and from the west rich orange blossoms,
But from the heart of the land take the passion-flower.

Rayed, violet, dim,
With the nails that pierced, the cross that he bore and the circlet,
And beside it there, lay also one lonely snow-white magnolia,
Bitter for remembrance of the healing which has passed.

THE SKATERS

Black swallows swooping or gliding
In a flurry of entangled loops and curves;
The skaters skim over the frozen river.
And the grinding click of their skates as they impinge upon the surface,
Is like the brushing together of thin wing-tips of silver.

"H. D."

Hilda Doolittle was born September 10, 1886, at Bethlehem, Pennsylvania. When she was still a child, her father became Director of the Flower Observatory and the family moved to a suburb in the outskirts of Philadelphia. Hilda Doolittle attended a private school in West Philadelphia; entered Bryn Mawr College in 1904; and went abroad, for what was intended to be a short sojourn, in 1911. After a visit to Italy and France, she came to London, joining Ezra Pound and helping to organize the Imagists. Her work (signed "H. D.") began to appear in a few magazines and its unusual quality was recognized at once. She married one of the most talented of the English members of this group (Richard Aldington) in 1913 and remained in London, creating, through a chiseled verse, her pure and flawless reproductions of Greek poetry and

sculpture. In 1920, she made her long-deferred visit to America, settling on the Californian coast, returning, the following year, to England.

"H. D." is, by all odds, the most important of her group. She is the only one who has steadfastly held to the letter as well as the spirit of its *credo*. She is, in fact, the only true Imagist. Her poems, capturing the firm delicacy of the Greek models, are like a set of Tanagra figurines. Here, at first glance, the effect is chilling—beauty seems held in a frozen gesture. But it is in this very fixation of light, color and emotion that she achieves intensity. What, at first, seemed static becomes fluent; the arrested moment glows with brimming energy.

Observe the poem entitled "Heat." Here, in the fewest possible words, is something beyond the description of heat—here is the effect of it. In these lines one feels the very weight and solidity of a midsummer afternoon.

Her efforts to draw the contemporary world are less happy. She is best in her reflections of clear-cut loveliness in a quietly pagan world. Her art, in its precision and polish, is curiously Hellenic; "H. D.," in most of her moods, seems less of a contemporary than an inspired anachronism.

OREAD

Whirl up, sea—
Whirl your pointed pines.
Splash your great pines
On our rocks.
Hurl your green over us—
Cover us with your pools of fir.

"H. D."

PEAR TREE

Silver dust
lifted from the earth,
higher than my arms reach,
you have mounted.
O silver,
higher than my arms reach
you front us with great mass;

no flower ever opened
so staunch a white leaf,
no flower ever parted silver
from such rare silver;

O white pear,
your flower-tufts,
thick on the branch,
bring summer and ripe fruits
in their purple hearts.

HEAT

O wind, rend open the heat,
cut apart the heat,
rend it to tatters.

Fruit cannot drop
through this thick air—
fruit cannot fall into heat
that presses up and blunts

"H. D."

the points of pears
and rounds the grapes.

Cut through the heat—
plough through it,
turning it on either side
of your path.

LETHE

Nor skin nor hide nor fleece
    Shall cover you,
Nor curtain of crimson nor fine
Shelter of cedar-wood be over you,
    Nor the fir-tree
    Nor the pine.

Nor sight of whin nor gorse
    Nor river-yew,
    Nor fragrance of flowering bush,
Nor wailing of reed-bird to waken you.
    Nor of linnet
    Nor of thrush.

Nor word nor touch nor sight
    Of lover, you
Shall long through the night but for this:
The roll of the full tide to cover you
    Without question,
    Without kiss.

William Rose Benét

William Rose Benét was born at Fort Hamilton, New York Harbor, February 2, 1886. He was educated at Albany Academy and graduated from Yale in 1907. After various experiences as free-lance writer, publisher's reader, magazine editor and second lieutenant in the U. S. Air Service, Benét became the Associate Editor of the New York Post's *Literary Review* in 1920.

The outstanding feature of Benét's verse is its extraordinary whimsicality; an oriental imagination riots through his pages. Like the title-poem of his first volume, *Merchants from Cathay* (1913), all of Benét's volumes vibrate with a vigorous music; they are full of the sonorous stuff that one rolls out crossing wintry fields or tramping a road alone.

But Benét's charm is not confined to the lift and swing of rollicking choruses. His *The Falconer of God* (1914), *The Great White Wall* (1916) and *The Burglar of the Zodiac* (1918) contain decorations as bold as they are brilliant; they ring with a strange and spicy music evoked from seemingly casual words; they glow with a half-lurid, half-humorous reflection of the grotesque. There are times when Benét seems to be forcing his ingenuity. The poet frequently lets his fantastic Pegasus run away with him, and what started out to be a gallop among the stars ends in a scraping of shins on the pavement. But he is saved by an acrobatic dexterity even when his energy betrays him.

Moons of Grandeur (1920) represents the fullest development of Benét's unusual gifts; a combination of Eastern phantasy and Western vigor.

MERCHANTS FROM CATHAY

How that They came.

Their heels slapped their bumping mules; their fat chaps glowed.
Glory unto Mary, each seemed to wear a crown!

Like sunset their robes were on the wide, white road:
So we saw those mad merchants come dusting into town!

Of their Beasts,

Two paunchy beasts they rode on and two they drove before.
May the Saints all help us, the tiger-stripes they had!
And the panniers upon them swelled full of stuffs and ore!
The square buzzed and jostled at a sight so mad.

And their Boast,

They bawled in their beards, and their turbans they wried.
They stopped by the stalls with curvetting and clatter.
As bronze as the bracken their necks and faces dyed—
And a stave they sat singing, to tell us of the matter.

With its Burthen

"For your silks, to Sugarmago! For your dyes, to Isfahan!
Weird fruits from the Isle o' Lamaree.
But for magic merchandise,
For treasure-trove and spice,
Here's a catch and a carol to the great, grand Chan,
The King of all the Kings across the sea!

And Chorus.

"Here's a catch and a carol to the great, grand Chan;
For we won through the deserts to his sunset barbican;
And the mountains of his palace no Titan's reach may span
Where he wields his seignorie!

A first Stave Fearsome,

"Red-as-blood skins of Panthers, so bright against the sun
On the walls of the halls where his pillared state is set
They daze with a blaze no man may look upon.
And with conduits of beverage those floors run wet.

And a second Right hard To stomach

"His wives stiff with riches, they sit before him there.
Bird and beast at his feast make song and clapping cheer.
And jugglers and enchanters, all walking on the air,
Make fall eclipse and thunder—make moons and suns appear!

And a third, Which is a Laughable Thing.

"Once the Chan, by his enemies sore-prest, and sorely spent,
Lay, so they say, in a thicket 'neath a tree
Where the howl of an owl vexed his foes from their intent:
Then that fowl for a holy bird of reverence made he!

We hope to Hear them end,

"A catch and a carol to the great, grand Chan!
Pastmasters of disasters, our desert caravan
Won through all peril to his sunset barbican,
Where he wields his seignorie!
And crowns he gave us! We end where we began:
A catch and a carol to the great, grand Chan,
The King of all the Kings across the sea!"

And are in Terror,

Those mad, antic Merchants! . . . Their striped beasts did beat
The market-square suddenly with hooves of beaten gold!
The ground yawned gaping and flamed beneath our feet!
They plunged to Pits Abysmal with their wealth untold!

And dread it is Devil's Work!

And some say the Chan himself in anger dealt the stroke—
For sharing of his secrets with silly, common folk:
But Holy, Blessed Mary, preserve us as you may
Lest once more those mad Merchants come chanting from Cathay!

William Rose Benét

NIGHT[1]

Let the night keep
What the night takes,
Sighs buried deep,
Ancient heart-aches,
Groans of the lover,
Tears of the lost;
Let day discover not
All the night cost!

Let the night keep
Love's burning bliss,
Drowned in deep sleep
Whisper and kiss,
Thoughts like white flowers
In hedges of May;
Let such deep hours not
Fade with the day!

Monarch is night
Of all eldest things,
Pain and affright,
Rapturous wings;
Night the crown, night the sword
Lifted to smite.
Kneel to your overlord,
Children of night!

[1] From *Moons of Grandeur* by William Rose Benét. Copyright, 1920, George H. Doran Company, Publishers.

William Rose Benét

HOW TO CATCH UNICORNS

Its cloven hoofprint on the sand
Will lead you—where?
Into a phantasmagoric land—
Beware!

There all the bright streams run up-hill.
The birds on every tree are still.
But from stocks and stones, clear voices come
That should be dumb.

If you have taken along a net,
A noose, a prod,
You'll be waiting in the forest yet . . .
Nid—nod!

In a virgin's lap the beast slept sound,
They say . . . but I—
I think (Is anyone around?)
That's just a lie!

If you have taken a musketoon
To flinders 'twill flash 'neath the wizard moon.
So I should take browned batter-cake,
Hot-buttered inside, like foam to flake.

And I should take an easy heart
And a whimsical face,
And a tied-up lunch of sandwich and tart,
And spread a cloth in the open chase.

William Rose Benét

And then I should pretend to snore . . .

And I'd hear a snort and I'd hear a roar,
The wind of a mane and a tail, and four
Wild hoofs prancing the forest-floor.

And I'd open my eyes on a flashing horn—
And see the Unicorn!

Paladins fierce and virgins sweet . . .
But he's never had anything to eat!
Knights have tramped in their iron-mong'ry . . .
But nobody thought—that's all!—*he's hungry!*

ADDENDUM

Really hungry! Good Lord deliver us,
The Unicorn is not *carnivorous!*

John Hall Wheelock

John Hall Wheelock was born at Far Rockaway, Long Island, in 1886. He was graduated from Harvard, receiving his B.A. in 1908, and finished his studies at the Universities of Göttingen and Berlin, 1908-10.

Wheelock's first book is, in many respects, his best. *The Human Fantasy* (1911) sings with the voice of youth—a youth which is vibrantly, even vociferously, in love with existence. Rhapsodic and obviously influenced by Whitman and Henley, these lines beat bravely; a singing buoyance arrests one upon opening the volume. A headlong ecstasy rises from pages whose refain is "Splendid it is to live and glorious to die." *The Beloved Adventure* (1912) is less powerful but scarcely

less passionate. Lyric after lyric moves one by its athletic music and spiritual intensity.

Wheelock's subsequent volumes are less individualized. ***Love and Liberation*** (1913) and *Dust and Light* (1919) are long dilutions of the earlier strain. The music is still here, but most of the magic has gone. Wheelock has allowed himself to be exploited by his own fluency, and the result is unbelievably montonous. Yet even vast stretches of two hundred and thirty unvaried love-songs cannot bury a dozen or more vivid poems which lie, half-concealed, in a waste of verbiage.

In spite of his lapses and lack of selective taste, Wheelock is often a stirring lyricist. ***The Human Fantasy*** is one of the most remarkable "first" books of the period.

SUNDAY EVENING IN THE COMMON

Look—on the topmost branches of the world
  The blossoms of the myriad stars are thick;
  Over the huddled rows of stone and brick,
A few, sad wisps of empty smoke are curled
  Like ghosts, languid and sick.

One breathless moment now the city's moaning
  Fades, and the endless streets seem vague and dim;
  There is no sound around the whole world's rim,
Save in the distance a small band is droning
  Some desolate old hymn.

Van Wyck, how often have we been together
  When this same moment made all mysteries clear;
  —The infinite stars that brood above us here,
And the gray city in the soft June weather,
  So tawdry and so dear!

John Hall Wheelock

BEAUTY

The old, familiar Beauty,
  Caressed by the world's dead hands,
Beauty, so old and weary,
Beloved of a thousand lovers,
Worn with a thousand kisses,
Surprising—beneficent—holy—
  Comes to us all in the end.

LOVE AND LIBERATION

Lift your arms to the stars
And give an immortal shout;
Not all the veils of darkness
Can put your beauty out!

You are armed with love, with love,
Nor all the powers of Fate
Can touch you with a spear,
Nor all the hands of hate.

What of good and evil,
Hell and Heaven above—,
Trample them with love!
Ride over them with love!

John Hall Wheelock

NIRVANA

Sleep on, I lie at heaven's high oriels,
    Over the stars that murmur as they go
    Lighting your lattice-window far below;
And every star some of the glory spells
    Whereof I know.

I have forgotten you long, long ago,
    Like the sweet silver singing of thin bells
Vanished, or music fading faint and low.
    Sleep on, I lie at heaven's high oriels,
Who loved you so.

Joyce Kilmer

(Alfred) Joyce Kilmer was born at New Brunswick, New Jersey, December 6, 1886. He was graduated from Rutgers College in 1904 and received his A.B. from Columbia in 1906. After leaving Columbia he became, in rapid succession, instructor of Latin at Morristown High School, editor of a journal for horsemen, book salesman, book-reviewer, lexicographer, æsthete, interviewer, socialist and churchman.

After Kilmer became converted to Catholicism, his conception of the church was the Church Militant. "His thought," writes his biographer, Robert Cortes Holliday, "dwelt continually on warrior-saints. . . . As he saw it, there was no question as to his duty." In 1917 Kilmer joined the Officers' Reserve Training Corps, but he soon resigned from this. In less than three weeks after America entered the world war, he enlisted as a private in the Seventh Regiment, National Guard, New York. Shortly before the regiment left New York for Spartanburg, South Carolina, Kilmer was transferred at his

own request to the 165th Infantry. In spite of his avowed militancy, Kilmer was "a poet trying to be a soldier;" he made no effort to glorify war; his one hope was to wring some spiritual satisfaction out of the brutality.

On July 28, 1918, the five-day battle for the mastery of the heights beyond the river Ourcq was begun. Two days later, Sergeant Kilmer was killed in action.

Death came before the poet had developed or even matured his gifts. His first volume, *Summer of Love* (1911), is wholly imitative; it is full of reflections of a dozen other sources, "a broken bundle of mirrors." *Trees and Other Poems* (1914) contains the title-poem by which Kilmer is best known and, though various influences are still strong (one cannot miss the borrowed accents of Patmore, Belloc, Chesterton, Housman and—*vide* "Martin"—E. A. Robinson), a refreshing candor lights up the lines. *Main Street and Other Poems* (1917) is less derivative; the simplicity is less self-conscious, the ecstasy more spontaneous.

Besides his own poetry, Kilmer edited a selection of *Verses* by Hilaire Belloc (1916) and *Dreams and Images*, An Anthology of Catholic poets (1917).

TREES [1]

I think that I shall never see
A poem lovely as a tree.

A tree whose hungry mouth is prest
Against the sweet earth's flowing breast;

A tree that looks at God all day,
And lifts her leafy arms to pray;

[1] From *Trees and Other Poems* by Joyce Kilmer. Copyright, 1914, by George H. Doran Company, Publishers.

Joyce Kilmer

A tree that may in summer wear
A nest of robins in her hair;

Upon whose bosom snow has lain;
Who intimately lives with rain.

Poems are made by fools like me,
But only God can make a tree.

MARTIN [1]

When I am tired of earnest men,
  Intense and keen and sharp and clever,
Pursuing fame with brush or pen
  Or counting metal disks forever,
Then from the halls of shadowland
  Beyond the trackless purple sea
Old Martin's ghost comes back to stand
  Beside my desk and talk to me.

Still on his delicate pale face
  A quizzical thin smile is showing,
His cheeks are wrinkled like fine lace,
  His kind blue eyes are gay and glowing.
He wears a brilliant-hued cravat,
  A suit to match his soft gray hair,
A rakish stick, a knowing hat,
  A manner blithe and debonair.

[1] From *Trees and Other Poems* by Joyce Kilmer. Copyright, 1914, by George H. Doran Company, Publishers.

How good, that he who always knew
  That being lovely was a duty,
Should have gold halls to wander through
  And should himself inhabit beauty.
How like his old unselfish way
  To leave those halls of splendid mirth
And comfort those condemned to stay
  Upon the bleak and sombre earth.

Some people ask: What cruel chance
  Made Martin's life so sad a story?
Martin? Why, he exhaled romance
  And wore an overcoat of glory.
A fleck of sunlight in the street,
  A horse, a book, a girl who smiled,—
Such visions made each moment sweet
  For this receptive, ancient child.

Because it was old Martin's lot
  To be, not make, a decoration,
Shall we then scorn him, having not
  His genius of appreciation?
Rich joy and love he got and gave;
  His heart was merry as his dress.
Pile laurel wreaths upon his grave
  Who did not gain, but was, success.

Shaemas O Sheel

Shaemas O Sheel (Shields) was born September 19, 1886, in New York City. After graduating from high school, he revived the ancient Gaelic form of his family name and identified himself with the cause of Ireland in America.

O Sheel's two volumes, *The Blossomy Bough* (1911) and *The Light Feet of Goats* (1915), owe their chief impetus to the Celtic renascence and to W. B. Yeats in particular. But O Sheel's poetry, although influenced, is not merely derivative. His ancestry speaks through him with unmistakable accents; he is typically the Irish bard of whom Chesterton has written:

> **For the great Gaels of Ireland**
> **Are the men that God made mad;**
> **For all their wars are merry**
> **And all their songs are sad.**

A recurring if sometimes too determined mysticism and a muffled heroism individualize the best of his work.

THEY WENT FORTH TO BATTLE, BUT THEY ALWAYS FELL

They went forth to battle, but they always fell;
Their eyes were fixed above the sullen shields;
Nobly they fought and bravely, but not well,
And sank heart-wounded by a subtle spell.
They knew not fear that to the foeman yields,
They were not weak, as one who vainly wields
A futile weapon; yet the sad scrolls tell
How on the hard-fought field they always fell.

It was a secret music that they heard,
A sad sweet plea for pity and for peace;

Shaemas O Sheel

And that which pierced the heart was but a word,
Though the white breast was red-lipped where the sword
  Pressed a fierce cruel kiss, to put surcease
  On its hot thirst, but drank a hot increase.
Ah, they by some strange troubling doubt were stirred,
And died for hearing what no foeman heard.

They went forth to battle, but they always fell;
  Their might was not the might of lifted spears;
Over the battle-clamor came a spell
Of troubling music, and they fought not well.
  Their wreaths are willows and their tribute, tears;
  Their names are old sad stories in men's ears;
Yet they will scatter the red hordes of Hell,
Who went to battle forth and always fell.

Roy Helton

Roy Helton was born at Washington, D. C., in 1886. He graduated from the University of Pennsylvania in 1908. He studied art—and found he was color-blind. He spent two years at inventions—and found he had no business sense. After a few more experiments, he became a schoolmaster in West Philadelphia.

Helton's first volume, *Youth's Pilgrimage* (1915), is a strange, mystical affair, full of vague symbolism with a few purple patches. *Outcasts in Beulah Land* (1918) is entirely different in theme and treatment. This is a much starker verse; a poetry of city streets, direct and sharp.

Roy Helton

IN PASSING

Through the dim window, I could see
  The little room—a sordid square
Of helter-skelter penury:
  Piano, whatnot, splintered chair. . . .

It is so small a room that I
  Seem almost at the woman's side:
Galled jade—too fat for vanity,
  And far too frankly old for pride.

Her greasy apron 'round her waist;
  The dish cloth by her on the chair;
As if in some wild headlong haste,
  She has come in and settled there.

Grimly she bends her back and tries
  To stab the keys, with heavy hand;
A child's first finger exercise
  Before her on the music stand.

David Morton

David Morton was born at Elkton, Kentucky, February 21, 1886. He graduated from Vanderbilt University in 1909, engaging in newspaper work immediately thereafter. After ten years of writing for various papers in the South, Morton came to New Jersey, where he now lives, being teacher of English at Morristown High School.

The greater part of Morton's work is in the sonnet form, a

form into which he has carried a new warmth without sacrificing the old dignity. The best of these verses are to be found in his first volume, *Ships in Harbor and Other Poems.*

SYMBOLS [1]

Beautiful words, like butterflies, blow by,
With what swift colors on their fragile wings!—
Some that are less articulate than a sigh,
Some that were names of ancient, lovely things.
What delicate careerings of escape,
When they would pass beyond the baffled reach,
To leave a haunting shadow and a shape,
Eluding still the careful traps of speech.

And I who watch and listen, lie in wait,
Seeing the cloudy cavalcades blow past,
Happy if some bright vagrant, soon or late,
May venture near the snares of sound, at last—
Most fortunate captor if, from time to time,
One may be taken, trembling, in a rhyme.

OLD SHIPS

There is a memory stays upon old ships,
A weightless cargo in the musty hold,—
Of bright lagoons and prow-caressing lips,
Of stormy midnights,—and a tale untold.

[1] Reprinted, by permission, from *Poetry: A Magazine of Verse.*

David Morton

They have remembered islands in the dawn,
  And windy capes that tried their slender spars,
And tortuous channels where their keels have gone,
  And calm blue nights of stillness and the stars.

Ah, never think that ships forget a shore,
  Or bitter seas, or winds that made them wise;
There is a dream upon them, evermore;
  And there be some who say that sunk ships rise
To seek familiar harbors in the night,
Blowing in mists, their spectral sails like light.

Orrick Johns

Orrick Johns was born at St. Louis, Missouri, in 1887. He schooled himself to be an advertising copy writer, his creative work being kept as an avocation.

Asphalt and Other Poems (1917) is a queer mixture. Cheap stanzas crowd against lines of singular beauty; poor dialect verse elbows lyrics that sing without a false note. The same incongruity is evident in *Black Branches* (1920), where much that is strained and artificial mingles with poetry that is not only spontaneous but searching. At his best, notably in the refreshing "Country Rhymes," Johns is a true singer, a lyricist of no little stature.

THE INTERPRETER

In the very early morning when the light was low
She got all together and she went like snow,
Like snow in the springtime on a sunny hill,
And we were only frightened and can't think still.

We can't think quite that the katydids and frogs
And the little crying chickens and the little grunting hogs,
And the other living things that she spoke for to us
Have nothing more to tell her since it happened thus.

She never is around for any one to touch,
But of ecstasy and longing she too knew much . . .
And always when any one has time to call his own
She will come and be beside him as quiet as a stone.

LITTLE THINGS

There's nothing very beautiful and nothing very gay
About the rush of faces in the town by day;
But a light tan cow in a pale green mead,
That is very beautiful, beautiful indeed . . .
And the soft March wind and the low March mist
Are better than kisses in a dark street kissed . . .
The fragrance of the forest when it wakes at dawn,
The fragrance of a trim green village lawn,
The hearing of the murmur of the rain at play—
These things are beautiful, beautiful as day!
And I shan't stand waiting for love or scorn
When the feast is laid for a day new-born
Oh, better let the little things I loved when little
Return when the heart finds the great things brittle;
And better is a temple made of bark and thong
Than a tall stone temple that may stand too long.

Margaret Widdemer

Margaret Widdemer was born at Doylestown, Pennsylvania, and began writing in her childhood. After graduating from Drexel Institute Library School in 1909, she became a contributor of poems and short stories to various magazines—her first published poem ("The Factories") being widely quoted. She married Robert Haven Schauffler, the author, in August, 1919.

Miss Widdemer's poetic work has two distinct phases. In the one mood, she is the protesting poet, the champion of the down-trodden, the lyricist on fire with angry passion. In the other, she is the writer of well-made, polite and popular sentimental verse. Her finest poems are in *Factories with Other Lyrics* (1915), although several of her best songs are in *The Old Road to Paradise* (1918), which divided, with Sandburg's *Cornhuskers,* the Columbia Poetry Prize in 1918.

Miss Widdemer is also the author of two books of short stories, four novels and several books for girls.

FACTORIES

I have shut my little sister in from life and light
(For a rose, for a ribbon, for a wreath across my hair),
I have made her restless feet still until the night,
Locked from sweets of summer and from wild spring air;
I who ranged the meadowlands, free from sun to sun,
Free to sing and pull the buds and watch the far wings fly,
I have bound my sister till her playing time was done—
Oh, my little sister, was it I? Was it I?

I have robbed my sister of her day of maidenhood
(For a robe, for a feather, for a trinket's restless spark),
Shut from love till dusk shall fall, how shall she know good,
How shall she go scatheless through the sun-lit dark?
I who could be innocent, I who could be gay,
I who could have love and mirth before the light went by,
I have put my sister in her mating-time away—
Sister, my young sister, was it I? Was it I?

I have robbed my sister of the lips against her breast,
(For a coin, for the weaving of my children's lace and lawn),
Feet that pace beside the loom, hands that cannot rest—
How can she know motherhood, whose strength is gone?
I who took no heed of her, starved and labor-worn,
I, against whose placid heart my sleepy gold-heads lie,
Round my path they cry to me, little souls unborn—
God of Life! Creator! It was I! It was I!

THE TWO DYINGS

I can remember once, ere I was dead,
The sorrow and the prayer and bitter cry
When they who loved me stood around the bed,
Watching till I should die:

Alan Seeger

It may be he shall take my hand
And lead me into his dark land
And close my eyes and quench my breath—
It may be I shall pass him still.
I have a rendezvous with Death
On some scarred slope of battered hill,
When Spring comes round again this year
And the first meadow-flowers appear.

God knows 'twere better to be deep
Pillowed in silk and scented down,
Where love throbs out in blissful sleep,
Pulse nigh to pulse, and breath to breath,
Where hushed awakenings are dear . . .
But I've a rendezvous with Death
At midnight in some flaming town,
When Spring trips north again this year,
And I to my pledged word am true,
I shall not fail that rendezvous.

Willard Wattles

Willard (Austin) Wattles was born at Bayneville, Kansas, July 8, 1888. He received his A.B. at the University of Kansas in 1909 and, since 1910, has divided his time between teaching English and harvesting wheat.

His first book was an anthology, ***Sunflowers: A Book of Kansas Poems*** (1914), to which he also contributed. ***Lanterns in Gethsemane*** (1918) consists, almost entirely, of mystical and religious poems. There is, however, little of the sermonizing unction and less cant in these fresh pages. There is an unusual

vibrancy here; a warm buoyance that glows against its theological background. Many of Wattles's verses have the peculiar grace of a parable joined to a nursery rhyme; "The Builder," "Jericho" and a few others seem like scraps of the Scripture rendered by Mother Goose.

THE BUILDER [1]

Smoothing a cypress beam
With a scarred hand,
I saw a carpenter
In a far land.

Down past the flat roofs
Poured the white sun;
But still he bent his back,
The patient one.

And I paused surprised
In that queer place
To find an old man
With a haunting face.

"Who art thou, carpenter,
Of the bowed head;
And what buildest thou?"
"Heaven," he said.

[1] Taken by permission from *Lanterns in Gethsemane* by Willard Wattles. Copyright, 1918, by E. P. Dutton & Co., New York.

Willard Wattles

CREEDS

How pitiful are little folk—
They seem so very small;
They look at stars, and think they are
Denominational.

T. S. Eliot

Thomas Stearns Eliot, one of the most brilliant of the young expatriates, was born at St. Louis, Missouri, in 1888. He received his A.B. at Harvard in 1909 and his A.M. in 1910. Subsequently, he studied at the Sorbonne and at Merton College, Oxford, becoming a teacher and lecturer in London, where he has lived since 1913.

Prufrock appeared in England in 1917. An American edition, including a number of other verses, was published under the title *Poems* in 1920. Eliot's early work is the more important; it is curious and sharply original. The exaltation which is the very breath of poetry is seldom present in Eliot's later lines. A certain perverse brilliance takes its place, an unearthly light without warmth which has the sparkle if not the strength of fire. It flickers mockingly through most of Eliot's sardonic pictures and shines with a bright pallor out of "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock" and "Portrait of a Lady." These two long poems are the book's main exhibit; they are sensitive and psychologically probing.

Eliot's ironic rhymed verses, which constitute the bulk of his work, are in his later style. It is this vein that tempts Eliot most—and is his own undoing. For irony, no matter how agile and erudite—and Eliot's is both—must contain heat if it is to burn. And heat is one of the few things that cannot be juggled by this acrobatic satirist. His lines, for the most part, are a species of mordant light verse; complex and disillusioned *vers de société*.

T. S. Eliot

MORNING AT THE WINDOW

They are rattling breakfast plates in basement kitchens,
And along the trampled edges of the street
I am aware of the damp souls of housemaids
Sprouting despondently at area gates.

The brown waves of fog toss up to me
Twisted faces from the bottom of the street,
And tear from a passer-by with muddy skirts
An aimless smile that hovers in the air
And vanishes along the level of the roofs.

FROM "THE LOVE SONG OF J. ALFRED PRUFROCK"

The yellow fog that rubs its back upon the window-panes,
The yellow smoke that rubs its muzzle on the window-panes,
Licked its tongue into the corners of the evening,
Lingered upon the pools that stand in drains,
Let fall upon its back the soot that falls from chimneys,
Slipped by the terrace, made a sudden leap,
And, seeing that it was a soft October night,
Curled once about the house, and fell asleep.

T. S. Eliot

PRELUDE

The winter evening settles down
With smells of steaks in passageways.
Six o'clock.
The burnt-out ends of smoky days.
And now a gusty shower wraps
The grimy scraps
Of withered leaves about his feet
And newspapers from vacant lots;
The showers beat
On broken blinds and chimney pots,
And at the corner of the street
A lonely cab-horse steams and stamps.
And then the lighting of the lamps.

Conrad Aiken

Conrad (Potter) Aiken was born at Savannah, Georgia, August 5, 1889. He attended Harvard, receiving his A.B. in 1912, travelled extensively for three years, and since then, he has devoted all his time to literature, living at South Yarmouth, Massachusetts.

The most outstanding feature of Aiken's creative work is its rapid adaptability and its slow growth. His first volume, *Earth Triumphant and Other Tales in Verse* (1914), is the Keats tradition crossed, paraphrased (and vulgarized) by Masefield. *Turns and Movies* (1916) is a complete change; Masefield is exchanged for Masters. But in the less conspicuous half of this book, Aiken begins to speak with his true voice. Here he is the natural musician, playing with new rhythms, haunting cadences. *The Jig of Forslin* (1916) is an elaboration

of his method. In this volume, Aiken goes back to the narrative—or rather, to a series of loosely connected stories—and, reinforced by studies in analytical psychology, explores "the process of vicarious wish fulfilment by which civilized man enriches his circumscribed life."

Nocturne of Remembered Spring (1917), *The Charnel Rose* (1918) and *The House of Dust* (1920) are packed with a tired but often beautiful music. Even though much of it is enlivened by injections of T. S. Eliot's conversational idiom, the effect is often moony and montonous. Rain seems to fall persistently through these volumes; dust blows down the street, the shadows blur; everything dissolves in a mist of boredom and forgetfulness. Even the poignance seems on the point of falling asleep.

Often Aiken loses himself in this watery welter of language. In trying to create a closer *liaison* between poetry and music, he gives, too frequently, so much importance to the rise and fall of syllables that his very excess of music defeats his purpose. His verse, thus, gains greatly on the sensuous side but loses, in its cloying indefiniteness, that vitality and sharpness of speech which is the very blood of poetry.

This weakening overinsistence on sound does not prevent Aiken from attaining many exquisite effects. Primarily, a lyric poet, he frequently condenses an emotion in a few lines; some of his best moments are these "lapses" into tune. The music of the Morning Song from "Senlin" (in *The Charnel Rose*) is rich with subtleties of rhythm. But it is much more than a lyrical movement. Beneath the flow and flexibility of these lines, there is a delightful whimsicality, an extraordinary summoning of the immensities that loom behind the casual moments of everyday. And in "The Fulfilled Dream," Aiken can divert the stream of the subconscious, whose vague outlines he reproduces so well, to show the dream in its vivid strength.

Besides his varied poetry, Aiken has written a quantity of criticism of contemporary poets, the best of his reviews having been published in *Scepticisms* (1919), a provocative and valuable series of studies.

Conrad Aiken

CHANCE MEETINGS

In the mazes of loitering people, the watchful and furtive,
The shadows of tree-trunks and shadows of leaves,
In the drowse of the sunlight, among the low voices,
I suddenly face you,

Your dark eyes return for a space from her who is with
you,
They shine into mine with a sunlit desire,
They say an 'I love you, what star do you live on?'
They smile and then darken,

And silent, I answer 'You too—I have known you,—
I love you!—'
And the shadows of tree-trunks and shadows of leaves
Interlace with low voices and footsteps and sunlight
To divide us forever.

THE FULFILLED DREAM

More towers must yet be built—more towers destroyed—
Great rocks hoisted in air;
And he must seek his bread in high pale sunlight
With gulls about him, and clouds just over his eyes. . . .
And so he did not mention his dream of falling
But drank his coffee in silence, and heard in his ears
That horrible whistle of wind, and felt his breath
Sucked out of him, and saw the tower flash by

And the small tree swell beneath him. . . .
He patted his boy on the head, and kissed his wife,
Looked quickly around the room, to remember it,—
And so went out. . . . For once, he forgot his pail.

Something had changed—but it was not the street—
The street was just the same—it was himself.
Puddles flashed in the sun. In the pawn-shop door
The same old black cat winked green amber eyes;
The butcher stood by his window tying his apron;
The same men walked beside him, smoking pipes,
Reading the morning paper. . . .

He would not yield, he thought, and walk more slowly,
As if he knew for certain he walked to death:
But with his usual pace,—deliberate, firm,
Looking about him calmly, watching the world,
Taking his ease. . . . Yet, when he thought again
Of the same dream, now dreamed three separate times,
Always the same, and heard that whistling wind,
And saw the windows flashing upward past him,—
He slowed his pace a little, and thought with horror
How monstrously that small tree thrust to meet him! . . .
He slowed his pace a little and remembered his wife.

Was forty, then, too old for work like this?
Why should it be? He'd never been afraid—
His eye was sure, his hand was steady. . . .
But dreams had meanings.

He walked more slowly, and looked along the roofs,
All built by men, and saw the pale blue sky;
And suddenly he was dizzy with looking at it,
It seemed to whirl and swim,
It seemed the color of terror, of speed, of death. . . .
He lowered his eyes to the stones, he walked more slowly;
His thoughts were blown and scattered like leaves;
He thought of the pail. . . . Why, then, was it forgotten?
Because he would not need it?

Then, just as he was grouping his thoughts again
About that drug-store corner, under an arc-lamp,
Where first he met the girl whom he would marry,—
That blue-eyed innocent girl, in a soft blouse,—
He waved his hand for signal, and up he went
In the dusty chute that hugged the wall;
Above the tree; from girdered floor to floor;
Above the flattening roofs, until the sea
Lay wide and waved before him. . . . And then he stepped
Giddily out, from that security,
To the red rib of iron against the sky,
And walked along it, feeling it sing and tremble;
And looking down one instant, saw the tree
Just as he dreamed it was; and looked away,
And up again, feeling his blood go wild.

—He gave the signal; the long girder swung
Closer upon him, dropped clanging into place,
Almost pushing him off. Pneumatic hammers
Began their madhouse clatter, the white-hot rivets

Were tossed from below and deftly caught in pails;
He signalled again, and wiped his mouth, and thought
A place so high in the air should be more quiet.
The tree, far down below, teased at his eyes,
Teased at the corners of them, until he looked,
And felt his body go suddenly small and light;
Felt his brain float off like a dwindling vapor;
And heard a whistle of wind, and saw a tree
Come plunging up to him, and thought to himself,
'By God—I'm done for now; the dream was right. . . .'

MIRACLES

Twilight is spacious, near things in it seem far,
And distant things seem near.
Now in the green west hangs a yellow star.
And now across old waters you may hear
The profound gloom of bells among still trees,
Like a rolling of huge boulders beneath seas.

Silent as thought in evening contemplation
Weaves the bat under the gathering stars.
Silent as dew, we seek new incarnation,
Meditate new avatars.
In a clear dusk like this
Mary climbed up the hill to seek her son,
To lower him down from the cross, and kiss
The mauve wounds, every one.

Men with wings
In the dusk walked softly after her.
She did not see them, but may have felt
The winnowed air around her stir;
She did not see them, but may have known
Why her son's body was light as a little stone.
She may have guessed that other hands were there
Moving the watchful air.

Now, unless persuaded by searching music
Which suddenly opens the portals of the mind,
We guess no angels,
And are contented to be blind.
Let us blow silver horns in the twilight,
And lift our hearts to the yellow star in the green,
To find perhaps, if, while the dew is rising,
Clear things may not be seen.

MORNING SONG FROM "SENLIN"

It is morning, Senlin says, and in the morning
When the light drips through the shutters like the dew,
I arise, I face the sunrise,
And do the things my fathers learned to do.
Stars in the purple dusk above the rooftops
Pale in a saffron mist and seem to die,
And I myself on a swiftly tilting planet
Stand before a glass and tie my tie.

Conrad Aiken

Vine-leaves tap my window,
Dew-drops sing to the garden stones,
The robin chirps in the chinaberry tree
Repeating three clear tones.

It is morning. I stand by the mirror
And tie my tie once more.
While waves far off in a pale rose twilight
Crash on a white sand shore.
I stand by a mirror and comb my hair:
How small and white my face!—
The green earth tilts through a sphere of air
And bathes in a flame of space.
There are houses hanging above the stars
And stars hung under a sea . . .
And a sun far off in a shell of silence
Dapples my walls for me. . . .

It is morning, Senlin says, and in the morning
Should I not pause in the light to remember God?
Upright and firm I stand on a star unstable,
He is immense and lonely as a cloud.
I will dedicate this moment before my mirror
To him alone, for him I will comb my hair.
Accept these humble offerings, clouds of silence!
I will think of you as I descend the stair.

Vine-leaves tap my window,
The snail-track shines on the stones;
Dew-drops flash from the chinaberry tree
Repeating two clear tones.

It is morning, I awake from a bed of silence,
Shining I rise from the starless waters of sleep.
The walls are about me still as in the evening,
I am the same, and the same name still I keep.
The earth revolves with me, yet makes no motion,
The stars pale silently in a coral sky.
In a whistling void I stand before my mirror,
Unconcerned, and tie my tie.

There are horses neighing on far-off hills
Tossing their long white manes,
And mountains flash in the rose-white dusk,
Their shoulders black with rains. . . .
It is morning, I stand by the mirror
And surprise my soul once more;
The blue air rushes above my ceiling,
There are suns beneath my floor. . . .

. . . It is morning, Senlin says, I ascend from darkness
And depart on the winds of space for I know not where;
My watch is wound, a key is in my pocket,
And the sky is darkened as I descend the stair.
There are shadows across the windows, clouds in heaven,
And a god among the stars; and I will go
Thinking of him as I might think of daybreak
And humming a tune I know. . . .

Vine-leaves tap at the window,
Dew-drops sing to the garden stones,
The robin chirps in the chinaberry tree
Repeating three clear tones.

Christopher Morley

Christopher (Darlington) Morley was born at Haverford, Pennsylvania, May 5, 1890. He graduated from Haverford College in 1910 and was Rhodes Scholar at New College, Oxford, England, 1910-13.

Since 1914 he has been on the staff of various periodicals, coming to New York in 1920 to run his column ("The Bowling Green") on the New York *Evening Post.*

Morley is the author of ten dissimilar volumes of essays, skits, gossip, travel-notes, light verse and serious poetry. *The Rocking Horse* (1919) and *Hide and Seek* (1920) sink too often in their own sentiment; their sweetness is frequently cloying, their charm a little too conscious. But Morley's vigor energizes his lines and prevents his verses—especially those in the latter volume—from becoming tawdry with oversweetness.

QUICKENING[1]

Such little, puny things are words in rhyme:
  Poor feeble loops and strokes as frail as hairs;
You see them printed here, and mark their chime,
  And turn to your more durable affairs.
  Yet on such petty tools the poet dares
To run his race with mortar, bricks and lime,
  And draws his frail stick to the point, and stares
To aim his arrow at the heart of Time.

Intangible, yet pressing, hemming in,
  This measured emptiness engulfs us all,
And yet he points his paper javelin
  And sees it eddy, waver, turn, and fall,
And feels, between delight and trouble torn,
The stirring of a sonnet still unborn.

[1] From *Hide and Seek* by Christopher Morley. Copyright, 1920. George H. Doran Company, Publishers.

Christopher Morley

Leslie Nelson Jennings

Leslie Nelson Jennings was born in 1891 at Ware, Massachusetts. When he was five years old, he moved to California, where he has lived ever since. For a short term, he worked on a newspaper but ill health forced him to discontinue this work and drove him to the hills.

Jennings's work is still in a formative stage. His lyrics, while personal in theme, are full of the manner and music of several of his contemporaries. His sonnets, like those of David Morton, show Jennings at his best; they are quiet but never dull reflections of loveliness.

FRUSTRATE

How futile are these scales in which we weigh
  Pity and passion, and the spirit's need!
  Words—and the veins of desperate peoples bleed!
Words—and a lark, and hedges white with may!
O must this rapture and this grief remain
  Uncaptured in our silences? And must
  We stand like stones, less lyrical than dust
That flowers beneath the benison of rain?

And if I say, "I love you," can you know,
  Save by the urgent beating of my heart,
  The flame that tears my baffled lips apart?
Poor symbols, cracked or broken long ago,
  What witness can you bear that we have tried
  To utter Beauty when our tongues were tied!

Maxwell Bodenheim

Maxwell Bodenheim was born at Natchez, Mississippi, May 26, 1892. His education, with the exception of grammar school training, was achieved under the guidance of the U. S. Army, in which Bodenheim served a full enlistment of three years, beginning in 1910. For a while he studied law and art in Chicago, but his mind, fascinated by the new poetry, turned to literature. He wrote steadily for five years without having a single poem accepted. In 1918, his first volume appeared and even those who were puzzled or repelled by Bodenheim's complex idiom were forced to recognize its intense individuality.

Minna and Myself (1918) reveals, first of all, this poet's extreme sensitivity to words. Words, under his hands, have unexpected growths; placid nouns and sober adjectives bear fantastic fruit. Sometimes he packs his metaphors so close that they become inextricably mixed. Sometimes he spins his fantasies so thin that the cord of coherence snaps and the poem frays into ragged and unpatterned ravellings. But, at his best, Bodenheim is as clear-headed as he is colorful.

In *Advice* (1920), Bodenheim's manner—and his mannerisms —are intensified. There is scarcely a phrase that is not tricked out with more ornaments and associations than it can bear; whole poems sink beneath the weight of their profuse decorations. Yet, in spite of his verbal exaggerations, this poetry achieves a keen if too ornate delicacy. In the realm of the whimsical-grotesque, Bodenheim walks with a light and nimble footstep.

POET TO HIS LOVE

An old silver church in a forest
Is my love for you.
The trees around it
Are words that I have stolen from your heart.

Maxwell Bodenheim

An old silver bell, the last smile you gave,
Hangs at the top of my church.
It rings only when you come through the forest
And stand beside it.
And then, it has no need for ringing,
For your voice takes its place.

OLD AGE

In me is a little painted square
Bordered by old shops with gaudy awnings.
And before the shops sit smoking, open-bloused old men,
Drinking sunlight.
The old men are my thoughts;
And I come to them each evening, in a creaking cart,
And quietly unload supplies.
We fill slim pipes and chat
And inhale scents from pale flowers in the centre of the square. . . .
Strong men, tinkling women, and dripping, squealing children
Stroll past us, or into the shops.
They greet the shopkeepers and touch their hats or foreheads to me. . . .
Some evening I shall not return to my people.

DEATH

I shall walk down the road;
I shall turn and feel upon my feet

Maxwell Bodenheim

The kisses of Death, like scented rain.
For Death is a black slave with little silver birds
Perched in a sleeping wreath upon his head.
He will tell me, his voice like jewels
Dropped into a satin bag,
How he has tip-toed after me down the road,
His heart made a dark whirlpool with longing for me.
Then he will graze me with his hands,
And I shall be one of the sleeping, silver birds
Between the cold waves of his hair, as he tip-toes on.

Edwin Curran

Edwin Curran was born at Zanesville, Ohio, May 10, 1892, and was educated at St. Thomas' School in the city of his birth. After working as an unskilled laborer in various trades, he learned telegraphy in 1914 and has been employed ever since as an operator for the Pennsylvania Railroad Company.

In 1917 he printed a little paper-bound pamphlet of thirty pages (*First Poems*) with this naïve note: "Price of this book is 35 cents postpaid. Author is 25, unmarried, a beginner and needs publisher. If this volume meets expenses, another, possibly better, will be issued." Expecting to find poetry of an absurd simplicity, one is startled to find striking images, strange pictures and (in such poems as "Soldier's Epitaph" and "Sailing of Columbus") lines like:

> We climbed the slippery alleys of the sea

and many a lyric flash like:

> The stars, like bells, flash down the silver sky . . .
> Ringing like chimes on frozen trees, or cry
> Along the marble ground.

Second Poems (1920) has a similar beauty mixed with banality. Both booklets are a jumble of passion, platitude, bad

grammar and exaltation. Curran has absolutely no critical perceptions; he has little control over his music. For better or for worse, his mood controls him.

AUTUMN

The music of the autumn winds sings low,
Down by the ruins of the painted hills,
Where death lies flaming with a marvelous glow,
Upon the ash of rose and daffodils.
But I can find no melancholy here
To see the naked rocks and thinning trees;
Earth strips to grapple with the winter year—
I see her gnarled hills plan for victories!

I love the earth who goes to battle now,
To struggle with the wintry whipping storm
And bring the glorious spring out from the night.
I see earth's muscles bared, her battle brow,
And am not sad, but feel her marvelous charm
As splendidly she plunges in the fight.

THE PAINTED HILLS OF ARIZONA

The rainbows all lie crumpled on these hills,
The red dawns scattered on their colored sills.
These hills have caught the lightning in its flight,
Caught colors from the skies of day and night
And shine with shattered stars and suns; they hold
Dyed yellow, red and purple, blue and gold.

Edwin Curran

Red roses seem within their marble blown,
A painted garden chiseled in the stone;
The rose and violet trickling through their veins,
Where they drop brilliant curtains to the plains—
A ramp of rock and granite, jeweled and brightening,
Like some great colored wall of lightning!

Edna St. Vincent Millay

Edna St. Vincent Millay, possibly the most gifted of the younger lyricists, was born February 22, 1892, at Rockland, Maine. After a childhood spent almost entirely in New England, she attended Vassar College, from which she was graduated in 1917. Since that time she has lived in New York City. Besides her keenly individual lyrics, Miss Millay has written a quantity of short stories under various pseudonyms, has translated several songs, and has been connected with the Provincetown Players both as playwright and performer.

Although the bulk of her poetry is not large, the quality of it approaches and sometimes attains greatness. Her first long poem, "Renascence," was the outstanding feature of *The Lyric Year* (1912), an anthology which revealed many new names. "Renascence" was written when Miss Millay was scarcely nineteen; it remains today one of the most remarkable poems of this generation. Beginning like a child's aimless verse it proceeds, with a calm lucidity, to an amazing climax. It is as if a child had, in the midst of its ingenuousness, uttered some terrific truth. The sheer cumulative power of this poem is surpassed only by its beauty.

Renascence, the name of Miss Millay's first volume, was published in 1917. It is full of the same passion as its title poem; here is a hunger for beauty so intense that no delight is great enough to give the soul peace. Such poems as "God's World" and the unnamed sonnets vibrate with this rapture. Magic

burns from the simplest of her lines. *Figs from Thistles* (1920) is a far more sophisticated booklet. Sharp and cynically brilliant, Miss Millay's craftsmanship no less than her intuition saves these poems from mere cleverness.

Second April (1921) is an intensification of her lyrical gift tinctured with an increasing sadness and disillusion. Her poignant poetic play, *Aria da Capo,* first performed by the Provincetown Players in New York, was published in *The Monthly Chapbook* (Harold Monro, England); the issue of July, 1920, being devoted to it.

GOD'S WORLD

O world, I cannot hold thee close enough!
Thy winds, thy wide grey skies!
Thy mists that roll and rise!
Thy woods, this autumn day, that ache and sag
And all but cry with colour! That gaunt crag
To crush! To lift the lean of that black bluff!
World, World, I cannot get thee close enough!

Long have I known a glory in it all,
But never knew I this;
Here such a passion is
As stretcheth me apart. Lord, I do fear
Thou'st made the world too beautiful this year.
My soul is all but out of me,—let fall
No burning leaf; prithee, let no bird call.

Edna St. Vincent Millay

RENASCENCE

All I could see from where I stood
Was three long mountains and a wood;
I turned and looked another way,
And saw three islands in a bay.
So with my eyes I traced the line
Of the horizon, thin and fine,
Straight around till I was come
Back to where I'd started from;
And all I saw from where I stood
Was three long mountains and a wood.
Over these things I could not see;
These were the things that bounded me;
And I could touch them with my hand,
Almost, I thought, from where I stand.
And all at once things seemed so small
My breath came short, and scarce at all.
But, sure, the sky is big, I said;
Miles and miles above my head;
So here upon my back I'll lie
And look my fill into the sky.
And so I looked, and, after all,
The sky was not so very tall.
The sky, I said, must somewhere stop,
And—sure enough!—I see the top!
The sky, I thought, is not so grand;
I 'most could touch it with my hand!
And, reaching up my hand to try,
I screamed to feel it touch the sky.

I screamed, and—lo!—Infinity
Came down and settled over me;
And, pressing of the Undefined
The definition on my mind,
Held up before my eyes a glass
Through which my shrinking sight did pass
Until it seemed I must behold
Immensity made manifold;
Whispered to me a word whose sound
Deafened the air for worlds around,
And brought unmuffled to my ears
The gossiping of friendly spheres,
The creaking of the tented sky,
The ticking of Eternity.

I saw and heard, and knew at last
The How and Why of all things, past,
And present, and forevermore.
The universe, cleft to the core,
Lay open to my probing sense
That, sick'ning, I would fain pluck thence
But could not,—nay! But needs must suck
At the great wound, and could not pluck
My lips away till I had drawn
All venom out.—Ah, fearful pawn!
For my omniscience paid I toll
In infinite remorse of soul.
All sin was of my sinning, all
Atoning mine, and mine the gall

Of all regret. Mine was the weight
Of every brooded wrong, the hate
That stood behind each envious thrust,
Mine every greed, mine every lust.
And all the while for every grief,
Each suffering, I craved relief
With individual desire,—
Craved all in vain! And felt fierce fire
About a thousand people crawl;
Perished with each,—then mourned for all!
A man was starving in Capri;
He moved his eyes and looked at me;
I felt his gaze, I heard his moan,
And knew his hunger as my own.
I saw at sea a great fog-bank
Between two ships that struck and sank;
A thousand screams the heavens smote;
And every scream tore through my throat.
No hurt I did not feel, no death
That was not mine; mine each last breath
That, crying, met an answering cry
From the compassion that was I.
All suffering mine, and mine its rod;
Mine, pity like the pity of God.
Ah, awful weight! Infinity
Pressed down upon the finite Me!
My anguished spirit, like a bird,
Beating against my lips I heard;
Yet lay the weight so close about
There was no room for it without.

And so beneath the weight lay I
And suffered death, but could not die.

Deep in the earth I rested now;
Cool is its hand upon the brow
And soft its breast beneath the head
Of one who is so gladly dead.
And all at once, and over all,
The pitying rain began to fall;
O God, I cried, give me new birth,
And put me back upon the earth!
Upset each cloud's gigantic gourd
And let the heavy rain, down-poured
In one big torrent, set me free,
Washing my grave away from me!

I ceased; and, through the breathless hush
That answered me, the far-off rush
Of herald wings came whispering
Like music down the vibrant string
Of my ascending prayer, and—crash!
Before the wild wind's whistling lash
The startled storm-clouds reared on high
And plunged in terror down the sky,
And the big rain in one black wave
Fell from the sky and struck my grave.

I know not how such things can be
I only know there came to me
A fragrance such as never clings
To aught save happy living things;

A sound as of some joyous elf
Singing sweet songs to please himself,
And, through and over everything,
A sense of glad awakening.
The grass, a tip-toe at my ear,
Whispering to me I could hear;
I felt the rain's cool finger-tips
Brushed tenderly across my lips,
Laid gently on my sealèd sight,
And all at once the heavy night
Fell from my eyes and I could see,—
I lay and heard each pattering hoof
Upon my lowly, thatchèd roof,
And seemed to love the sound far more
Than ever I had done before.
For rain it hath a friendly sound
To one who's six feet underground;
And scarce the friendly voice or face:
A grave is such a quiet place.

The rain, I said, is kind to come
And speak to me in my new home.
I would I were alive again
To kiss the fingers of the rain,
To drink into my eyes the shine
Of every slanting silver line,
To catch the freshened, fragrant breeze
From drenched and dripping apple-trees.
For soon the shower will be done,
And then the broad face of the sun

Will laugh above the rain-soaked earth
Until the world with answering mirth
Shakes joyously, and each round drop
Rolls, twinkling, from its grass-blade top.
How can I bear it; buried here,
While overhead the sky grows clear
And blue again after the storm?
O, multi-colored, multiform,
Beloved beauty over me,
That I shall never, never see
Again! Spring-silver, autumn-gold,
That I shall never more behold!
Sleeping your myriad magics through,
Close-sepulchred away from you!
A drenched and dripping apple-tree,
A last long line of silver rain,
A sky grown clear and blue again.
And as I looked a quickening gust
Of wind blew up to me and thrust
Into my face a miracle
Of orchard-breath, and with the smell,—
I know not how such things can be!—
I breathed my soul back into me.
Ah! Up then from the ground sprang I
And hailed the earth with such a cry
As is not heard save from a man
Who has been dead, and lives again.
About the trees my arms I wound;
Like one gone mad I hugged the ground;

Edna St. Vincent Millay

I raised my quivering arms on high;
I laughed and laughed into the sky,
Till at my throat a strangling sob
Caught fiercely, and a great heart-throb
Sent instant tears into my eyes;
O God, I cried, no dark disguise
Can e'er hereafter hide from me
Thy radiant identity!
Thou canst not move across the grass
But my quick eyes will see Thee pass,
Nor speak, however silently,
But my hushed voice will answer Thee.
I know the path that tells Thy way
Through the cool eve of every day;
God, I can push the grass apart
And lay my finger on Thy heart!

The world stands out on either side
No wider than the heart is wide;
Above the world is stretched the sky,—
No higher than the soul is high.
The heart can push the sea and land
Farther away on either hand;
The soul can split the sky in two,
And let the face of God shine through.
But East and West will pinch the heart
That cannot keep them pushed apart;
And he whose soul is flat—the sky
Will cave in on him by and by.

Edna St. Vincent Millay

PITY ME NOT

Pity me not because the light of day
At close of day no longer walks the sky;
Pity me not for beauties passed away
From field and thicket as the year goes by;
Pity me not the waning of the moon,
Nor that the ebbing tide goes out to sea,
Nor that a man's desire is hushed so soon,
And you no longer look with love on me.

This have I known always: love is no more
Than the wide blossom which the wind assails;
Than the great tide that treads the shifting shore,
Strewing fresh wreckage gathered in the gales.
Pity me that the heart is slow to learn
What the swift mind beholds at every turn.

I SHALL GO BACK

I shall go back again to the bleak shore
And build a little shanty on the sand
In such a way that the extremest band
Of brittle seaweed will escape my door
But by a yard or two, and nevermore
Shall I return to take you by the hand;
I shall be gone to what I understand
And happier than I ever was before.

The love that stood a moment in your eyes,
The words that lay a moment on your tongue,

Are one with all that in a moment dies,
A little under-said and over-sung;
But I shall find the sullen rocks and skies
Unchanged from what they were when I was young.

THE PEAR TREE

In this squalid, dirty dooryard,
  Where the chickens scratch and run,
White, incredible, the pear tree
  Stands apart and takes the sun,

Mindful of the eyes upon it,
  Vain of its new holiness,
Like the waste-man's little daughter
  In her first communion dress.

WILD SWANS

I looked in my heart while the wild swans went over;—
  And what did I see I had not seen before?
  Only a question less or a question more;
Nothing to match the flight of wild birds flying.
Tiresome heart, forever living and dying!
  House without air! I leave you and lock your door!
Wild swans, come over the town, come over
The town again, trailing your legs and crying!

Mary Carolyn Davies

Mary Carolyn Davies was born at Sprague, Washington, and was educated in the schools at and about Portland, Oregon. At college (the University of California) she won the Emily Chamberlin Cook prize for Poetry in 1912, being the first freshman to win it. In the same year, she established another precedent by being the first woman to win the Bohemian Club prize. With the proceeds, the young poet went to New York, arriving with the remnants of her fortune—four dollars and eighty-five cents.

The long struggle with the city began. Miss Davies wrote short stories, two serials, reams of sentimental verses—anything to keep alive. She turned finally to verse, chiefly because "when the rent is due there's no time to write a story, only verse can save one in time."

Her work divides itself into two distinct classes: the hack-work which she does for a living and the genuine poetry which she creates for its own sake. Her first volume *The Drums in Our Street* (1918) was a mixture of loud bombast and quiet beauty, of blatant war-verse and unaffected lyrics. *Youth Riding* (1919), although as uneven as its predecessor, is simpler and surer. The poems in *vers libre* are clearly musical, and her eight-line lyrics are particularly wistful and delicate.

THE DAY BEFORE APRIL[1]

The day before April,
  Alone, alone,
I walked in the woods
  And I sat on a stone.

[1] Reprinted by permission of the Publishers, The Macmillan Company. From *Youth Riding* by Mary Carolyn Davies.

Mary Carolyn Davies

I sat on a broad stone
  And sang to the birds.
The tune was God's making
  But I made the words.

THE APPLE TREE SAID:[1]

My apples are heavy upon me.
  It was the Spring;
And proud was I of my petals,
  Nor dreamed this thing:

That joy could grow to a burden,
  Or beauty could be
Changed from snow-light to heavy
  To humble me.

Winifred Welles

Winifred Welles was born at Norwich Town, Connecticut, January 26, 1893, and educated in the vicinity of her home.

Her frail and delicately fashioned lyrics are the distinguishing feature of *The Hesitant Heart* (1920). This first volume, so appropriately named, has a frank tenderness that never grows maudlin, a wistful introspection that never forgets to sing.

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Herbert S. Gorman

THE FANATIC

Well, here it is: you call for me: I come,
  But with an eagerness not quite my own;
Propelled by that decisive marytrdom
  That pleased the saints upon their faggot throne.

You see them smiling in the cruel flame
  That exqusitely licks their willing limbs,
And finding some sad pleasure in the game
  Not quite embodied in their lusty hymns.

And so I come: and though I go, be sure
  That I will come again to-morrow, too;
And, Love's fanatic, hasten to endure
  The littleness that is so great in you.

I am the weakling of that helpless strength
  That throws this broken body you despise
Before your carelessness, to find at length
  The faith that sleeps behind your faithless eyes.

Babette Deutsch

Babette Deutsch, one of the most promising of the younger poet-critics, was born September 22, 1895, in New York City. She received her B.A. at Barnard College in 1917, doing subsequent work at the new School for Social Research. Since 1916, a year before she took her degree, Miss Deutsch has been contributing poems and critical articles to *The New Republic, The Dial, The Yale Review,* etc.

Babette Deutsch

Banners **(1919) is the title of her remarkable first book. The rich emotional content is matched by the poet's intellectual skill. Unusually sensitive, most of these lines strive for—and attain—a high seriousness.**

THE DEATH OF A CHILD[1]

Are you at ease now,
Do you suck content
From death's dark nipple between your wan lips?
Now that the fever of the day is spent
And anguish slips
From the small limbs,
And they lie lapped in rest,
The young head pillowed soft upon that indurate breast.
No, you are quiet,
And forever,
Tho for us the silence is so loud with tears,
Wherein we hear the dreadful-footed years
Echoing, but your quick laughter never,
Never your stumbling run, your sudden face
Thrust in bright scorn upon our solemn fears.
Now the dark mother holds you close. . . . O, you
We loved so,
How you lie,
So strangely still, unmoved so utterly
Dear yet, but oh a little alien too.

[1] **From** ***Banners*** **by Babette Deutsch. Copyright, 1919. George H. Doran Co., Publishers.**

Babette Deutsch

IN A MUSEUM

Here stillness sounds like echoes in a tomb.
The light falls cold upon these antique toys
Whereby men sought to turn the scales of doom:
Jade gods, a ritual of rigid boys.
Warm blood was spent for this unwindowed stone
Tinct with the painted pleasures of the dead;
For secrets of unwithering flesh and bone—
With these old Egypt's night was comforted.

We lean upon the glass, our curious eyes
Staring at death, three thousand years remote.
And vanity, the worm that never dies,
Feeds on your silver ring and Pharaoh's coat.
And are these heartbeats, then, less perilous?
Since death is close, and death is death for us.

Alter Brody

Alter Brody was born at Kartúshkiya-Beróza, Province of Grodno, Russia, November 1, 1895. He came to New York City at the age of eight and, after a cursory schooling, wrote translations for certain Jewish and American newspapers. His first poems appeared in *The Seven Arts* in 1916-17.

In *A Family Album* (1918) one sees the impress of a tense and original mind, of imagination that is fed by strengthening fact, of sight that is sharpened by insight. Many of Brody's lines are uncouth and awkward; what music he achieves is mostly fortuitous, the melody accidental. And yet his pages are filled with a picturesque honesty and uncompromising beauty. Much of this work is an interpretation of the modern

world against a background of old dreams: young America seen through the eyes of old Russia. It is a romantic realism that uplifts such poems as "Kartúshkiya-Beróza" (a record of boyhood which is one of Brody's finest achievements though, unfortunately, too long to quote), "A Row of Poplars: Central Park," "Ghetto Twilight" and the poignant "Lamentations." It is, to be more accurate, a romanticism that springs from reality and, after a fantastic flight, settles back with a new vision.

A CITY PARK

Timidly
Against a background of brick tenements
Some trees spread their branches
Skyward.
They are thin and sapless,
They are bent and weary—
Tamed with captivity;
And they huddle behind the fence
Swaying helplessly before the wind,
Forward and backward,
Like a group of panicky deer
Caught in a cage.

SEARCHLIGHTS

Tingling shafts of light,
Like gigantic staffs
Brandished by blind, invisible hands,
Cross and recross each other in the sky,

Alter Brody

Frantically—
Groping among the stars—stubbing themselves against
the bloated clouds—
Tapping desperately for a sure foothold
In the fluctuating mists.

Calm-eyed and inaccessible.
The stars peer through the blue fissures of the sky,
Unperturbed among the panic of scurrying beams;
Twinkling with a cold, acrid merriment.

GHETTO TWILIGHT

An infinite weariness comes into the faces of the old
tenements,
As they stand massed together on the block,
Tall and thoughtfully silent,
In the enveloping twilight.
Pensively,
They eye each other across the street,
Through their dim windows—
With a sad recognizing stare;
Watching the red glow fading in the distance,
At the end of the street,
Behind the black church spires;
Watching the vague sky lowering overhead,
Purple with clouds of colored smoke;
From the extinguished sunset;
Watching the tired faces coming home from work—
Like dry-breasted hags
Welcoming their children to their withered arms.

Stephen Vincent Benét

Stephen Vincent Benét, the younger brother of William Rose Benét, was born at Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, in July, 1898. He was educated in various parts of the country, graduating from Yale in 1919.

At seventeen he published a small book containing six dramatic portraits, *Five Men and Pompey* (1915), a remarkable set of monologues which, in spite of distinct traces of Browning and Alfred Noyes, was little short of astounding, coming from a schoolboy. In Benét's next volume, *Young Adventure* (1918), one hears something more than the speech of an infant prodigy; the precocious facility has developed into a keen and individual vigor.

Heavens and Earth (1920), the most representative collection, has a greater imaginative sweep. Like his brother, the younger Benét is at his best in the decoratively grotesque; his fancy exults in running the scales between the whimsically bizarre and the lightly diabolic.

PORTRAIT OF A BOY

After the whipping, he crawled into bed;
Accepting the harsh fact with no great weeping.
How funny uncle's hat had looked striped red!
He chuckled silently. The moon came, sweeping
A black frayed rag of tattered cloud before
In scorning; very pure and pale she seemed,
Flooding his bed with radiance. On the floor
Fat motes danced. He sobbed; closed his eyes and dreamed.

Warm sand flowed round him. Blurts of crimson light
Splashed the white grains like blood. Past the cave's mouth
Shone with a large fierce splendor, wildly bright,
The crooked constellations of the South;

Stephen Vincent Benét

Here the Cross swung; and there, affronting Mars,
The Centaur stormed aside a froth of stars.
Within, great casks like wattled aldermen
Sighed of enormous feasts, and cloth of gold
Glowed on the walls like hot desire. Again,
Beside webbed purples from some galleon's hold,
A black chest bore the skull and bones in white
Above a scrawled "Gunpowder!" By the flames,
Decked out in crimson, gemmed with syenite,
Hailing their fellows by outrageous names
The pirates sat and diced. Their eyes were moons.
"Doubloons!" they said. The words crashed gold.
Doubloons!"

Hilda Conkling

Hilda Conkling, most gifted of recent infant prodigies, was born at Catskill-on-Hudson, New York, October 8, 1910. The daughter of Grace Hazard Conkling (see page 207), she came to Northampton, Massachusetts, with her mother when she was three years old and has lived there since, a normal out-of-doors little girl.

Hilda began to write poems—or rather, to talk them—at the age of four. Since that time, she has created one hundred and fifty little verses, many of them astonishing in exactness of phrase and beauty of vision. Hilda "tells" her poem and her mother copies it down, arranges the line-divisions and reads it to the child for correction. Conceding a possible half-conscious shaping by Mrs. Conkling, the quality which shines behind all of Hilda's little facets of loveliness is a straightforward ingenuousness, a child-like but sweeping fantasy.

Poems by a Little Girl (1920), published when Hilda was a little more than nine years old, is a detailed proof of this

delightful quality. Every poem bears its own stamp of unaffected originality; "Water," "Hay-Cock," and a dozen others are startling in their precision and a power of painting the familiar in unsuspected colors. This child not only sees, feels and hears with the concentration of a child-artist, she communicates the results of her perceptions with the sensitivity of a master-craftsman. She hears a chickadee talking

> The way smooth bright pebbles
> Drop into water.

Everything is extraordinarily vivid and fanciful to her keen senses. The rooster's comb is "gay as a parade;" he has "pearl trinkets on his feet" and

> The short feathers smooth along his back
> Are the dark color of wet rocks,
> Or the rippled green of ships
> When I look at their sides through water.

She observes:

> The water came in with a wavy look
> Like a spider's web.

It is too early for judgments—even for a prophecy. It is impossible to guess how much Hilda's vision will be distorted by knowledge and the traditions that will accompany her growth. One can only hold one's breath and hope for the preservation of so remarkable a talent.

WATER

The world turns softly
Not to spill its lakes and rivers.
The water is held in its arms
And the sky is held in the water.
What is water,
That pours silver,
And can hold the sky?

Hilda Conkling

HAY-COCK

This is another kind of sweetness
Shaped like a bee-hive:
This is the hive the bees have left,
It is from this clover-heap
They took away the honey
For the other hive!

THE OLD BRIDGE

The old bridge has a wrinkled face.
He bends his back
For us to go over.
He moans and weeps
But we do not hear.
Sorrow stands in his face
For the heavy weight and worry
Of people passing.
The trees drop their leaves into the water;
The sky nods to him.
The leaves float down like small ships
On the blue surface
Which is the sky.
He is not always sad:
He smiles to see the ships go down
And the little children
Playing on the river banks.

Hilda Conkling

I KEEP WONDERING

I saw a mountain,
And he was like Wotan looking at himself in the water.
I saw a cockatoo,
And he was like sunset clouds.
Even leaves and little stones
Are different to my eyes sometimes.
I keep wondering through and through my heart
Where all the beautiful things in the world
Come from.
And while I wonder
They go on being beautiful.

A SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

The following twelve volumes deal, in considerable detail, with many of the poets, groups and tendencies considered in this collection. A few treat principally of the period between 1860 and 1890; the majority, however, reflect the shifting course of contemporary poetry. Most of the dozen contain liberal quotations, references, illustrative poems and suggestions for supplementary reading.

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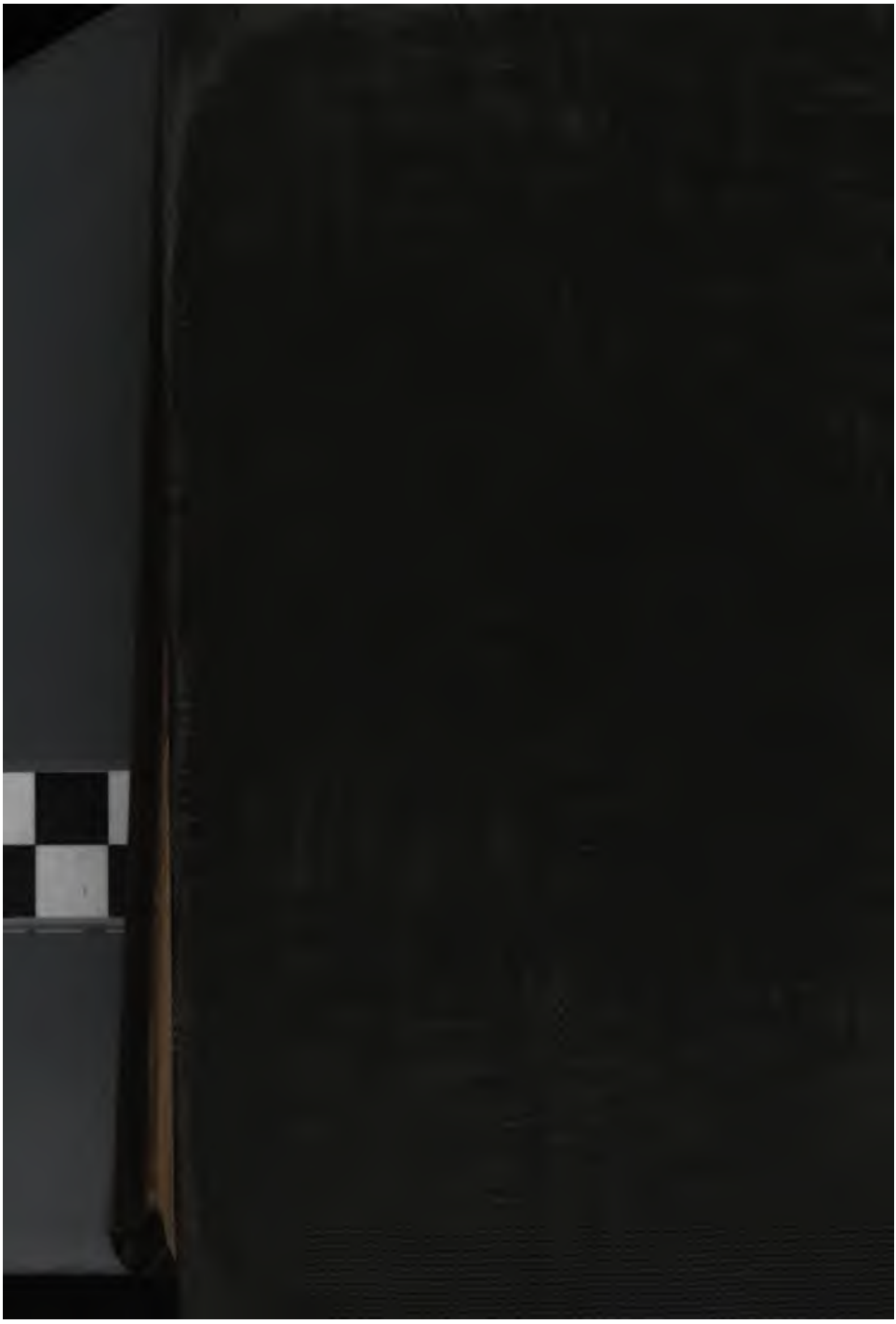
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